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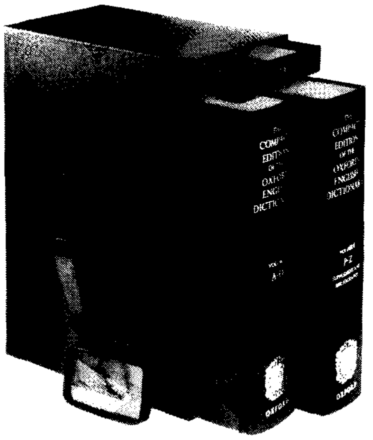

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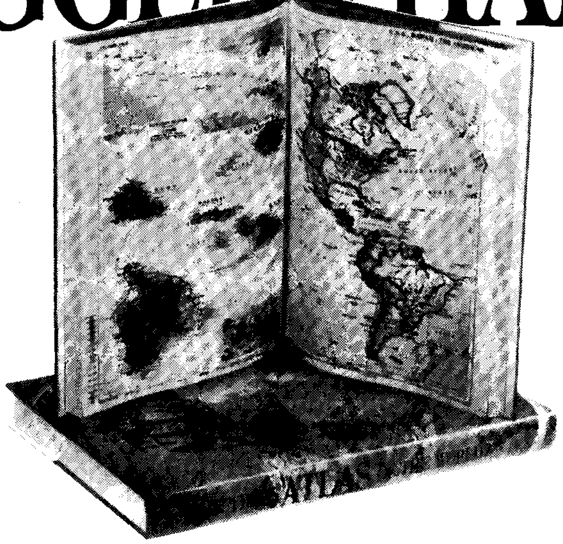

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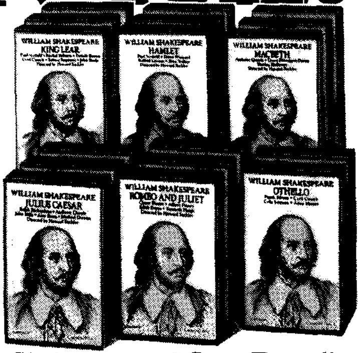

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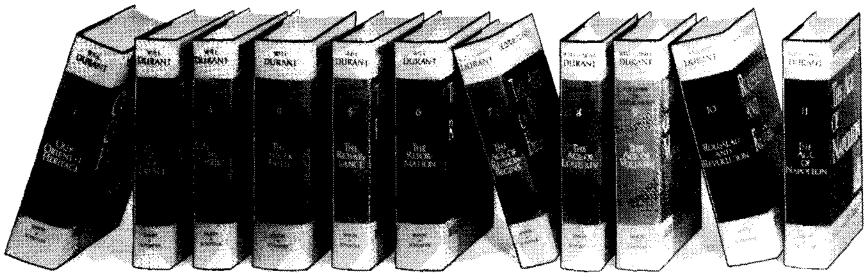

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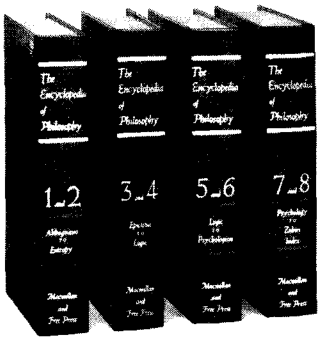

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

THE word "wonderful" is used so often in theatrical circles that it has almost lost all meaning. Not entirely, however: a presentation of Alexander Galich's "My Big Land" (in Russian), by the fourth-year acting-program students from the Moscow Art Theatre, made a truly wonderful evening during a brief run a few weeks ago at the Public—an evening that opened up a new world. (The company was in New York as part of an exchange between the Moscow group and the Juilliard School.) The play told the story of a Jewish violinist and his father, in the city of Tulchin in 1929, in Moscow in 1937, and in 1944 aboard a medical troop train. The two leading roles were played by Filip Yankovsky and Vladimir Mashkov. No one in the company is older than twenty-four, which made Mr. Mashkov's performance as the father astonishing, though everyone's acting was of a kind to be cherished forever. Oleg P. Tabakov was billed as the director, but we thought it was Stanislavsky himself.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Carnage, a Comedy—Straight from performances at the Edinburgh Festival comes this Actors' Gang production, which stars Lee Arenberg. It's directed by Tim Robbins, who also wrote the script (with Adam Simon). Previews begin Sept. 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Orpheus Descending—Vanessa Redgrave heads the cast of Peter Hall's production of the Tennessee Williams play. Previews for the twelve-week run begin Sept. 13. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Sweeney Todd—Bob Gunton and Beth Fowler in the York Theatre Company's production of the Sondheim musical, which had a brief run uptown last spring. Susan H. Schulman is the director. In previews. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Young Playwrights Festival—Four fully staged short plays by four writers in their teens. Two are directed by Thomas Babe, and one each by Mary B. Robinson and Mark Brokaw. Previews begin Sept. 12. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

RECENTLY OPENED

Aristocrats—Brian Friel's portrait of the family of Judge O'Donnell, of Ballybeg Hall, in Donegal, is witty, ironic, and loving. With John Christopher Jones, Maryann Plunkett, Robin Moseley, Tracy Fallows, Christopher Fields, and Michael O'Neill. Directed by Robin Lefèvre. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/8/89.) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-0102.)

Before Dawn—A spoof of "Tosca" by British playwright Terence Rattigan. Presented by the Quaigh Theatre Company. (Theatre 808, Lexington Ave. at 62nd St. 223-2547.)

Black and Blue—An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, Bunny Briggs, Jimmy Slyde, and a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (2/6/89, under Dancing.) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

The Infernal Machine—Jean Cocteau's tragedy, presented outdoors, by a group called A Matinée Idyll. (Battery Park's East Coast War Memorial, Sept. 7-8; Carl Schurz Park, East End Ave. at 86th St., Sept. 9-10. The free performances are at 4.)

Jerome Robbins' Broadway—A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. The evening is an orgy of family entertainment, a display of theatrical arts and crafts, and a canonization of Robbins and his era. Whether the fifties was your generation or your parents', this is the show for you. (3/13/89, under Dancing.) (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Kathy and Mo Show: Parallel Lives—Comedy skits and vignettes about gender and its role in society, written and performed by Kathy Najimy and Mo Gaffney. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

The Lady in Question—Charles Busch's new play, set in Germany during the Second World War, is the perfect entertainment for a late-summer night. It's less pointedly a parody of one genre or movie than his last work, "Psycho Beach Party," was, and more a travesty of an entire week's worth of TNT programming, compressed into a single evening of theatre. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

Lend Me a Tenor—The setting of this farce by Ken Ludwig is a hotel suite in Cleveland in 1934, where a famous tenor who is booked to sing "Otello" takes an overdose of barbiturates. A substitute must be found. Under Jerry Zaks' direction, all the surprises up the dramatist's sleeve are brought to comic life. Philip Bosco, Victor Garber, Tovah Feldshuh, J. Smith-Cameron, Ron Holgate, Jane Connell, and Jeff Brooks make up the splendid cast. (3/13/89) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Love Letters—Staged readings of A. R. Gurney's two-character play. Sept. 5-10, Swoosie Kurtz and Richard Thomas; Sept. 12-17, Elaine Stritch and Jason Robards. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Mandy Patinkin in Concert: Dress Casual—So called, presumably, because the *chanteur* gets to wear sneaks and a T-shirt—a costume that pretty much sets the tone for an evening of glorious song and good fun. Mr. Patinkin here tends to sing only what is either very, very simple (and old) or very, very complicated (and Sondheim). Much of the show's pleasure derives from Mr. Patinkin's between-song (and in some cases even mid-song) patter and the relationship that develops between him and his able pianist, Paul Ford. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 246-0102. Closes Sept. 16.)

Only Kidding!—Jim Geoghan's comedy about standup comedians, in all their panic and desperation, has the ring of authenticity, and jokes that invariably pay off. (One monologue, about a Greek restaurant, is a knockout.) The characters are an aging Catskills type; a young comedy team still scrambling for a foothold; a jumpy writer; and a beef-brained manager. All the actors do well, under the lively direction of Larry Arrick. (5/29/89) (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394.)

Other People's Money—Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York stockbroker's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. Kevin Conway can seldom have been better or funnier than he is as Bronx-born Lawrence Garfinkle. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

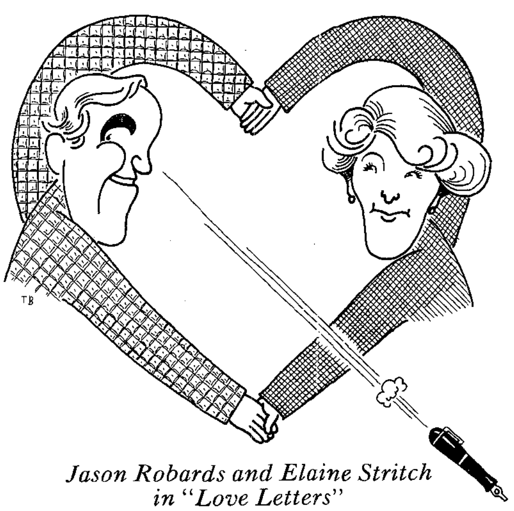
Privates on Parade—In a revival of the 1977 musical by Peter Nichols (book and lyrics) and Denis King (score), Jim Dale gives a stunning, wholehearted performance as a civilian actor among a unit of the British Army in Malaysia, in 1948. The officer in charge is beautifully played by Simon Jones. (9/4/89) (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

Shirley Valentine—Willy Russell's play about a Liverpool housewife who, feeling herself engulfed by drab domesticity, flies off to Greece, where she finds a temporary lover and lives happily ever after. With Ellen Burstyn in the title, and only, role. Directed by Simon Callow. (2/27/88) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Showing Off—As comedy revues go, this one—written by Douglas Bernstein and Denis Markell—isn't at all bad. The winning performances by Mr. Bernstein, Marilyn Pasekoff, Mark Sawyer, and Veanne Cox often make the material seem better than it is, but ultimately they don't compensate for the over-all smugness of what is essentially lifestyle comedy. (Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

LONG RUNS

CATS: Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently turned twenty-nine. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1989:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. The performers are Toni DiBuono, Dorothy Kiara, David B. McDonald, and Michael McGrath. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Christine Lahti. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **I COULD GO ON LIP-SYNCHING!:** This one-man variety show made up of cultural arcana is kind of weird, kind of quirky, and kind of brilliant. Performed by John Epperson and written by him and Justin Ross (who directed), it uses the rhetorical tactics of drag theatre to attack some of the Big Questions, managing not so much to



Jason Robards and Elaine Stritch in "Love Letters"

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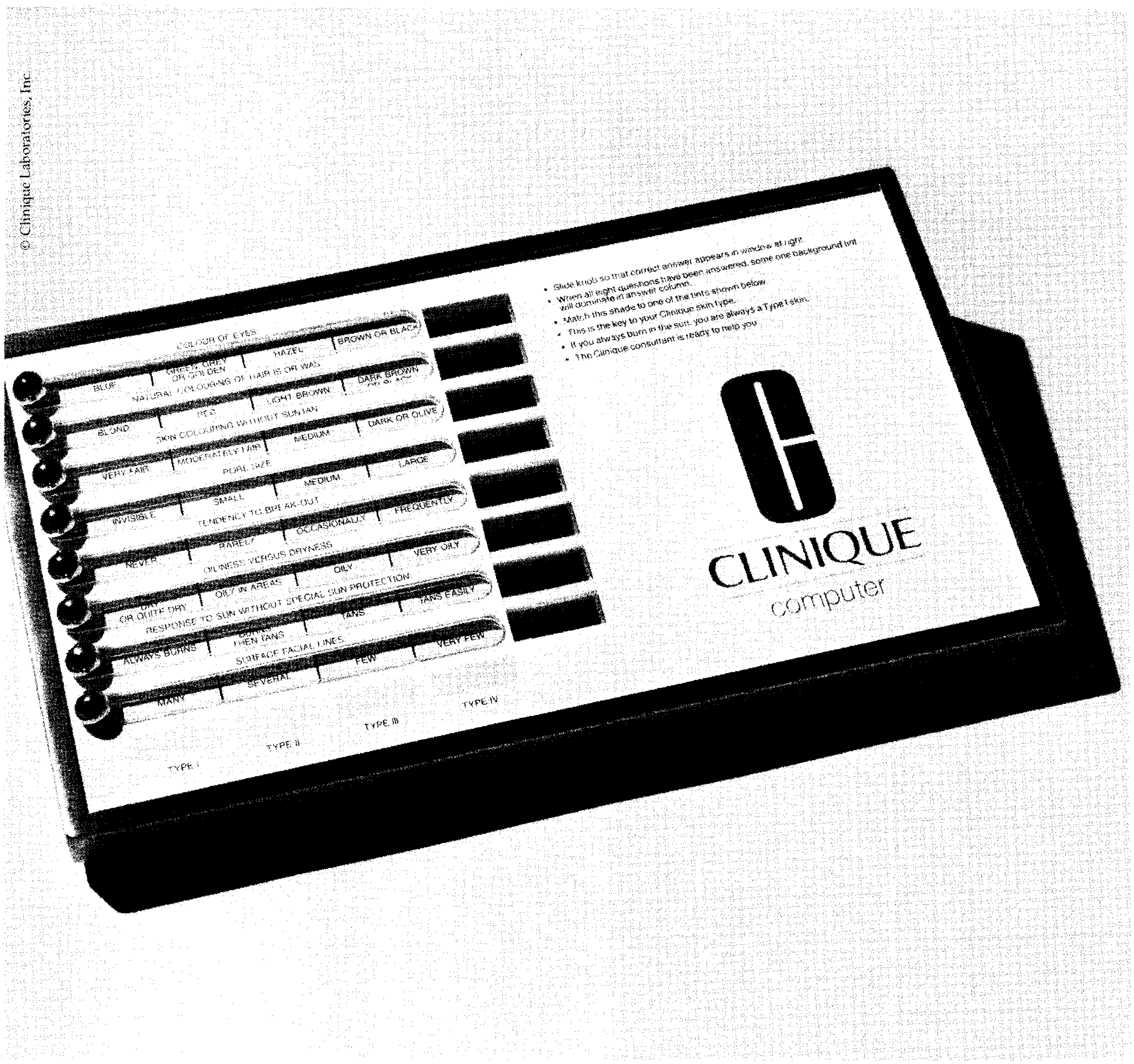
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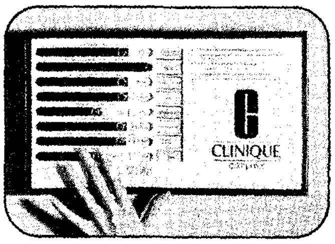

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

raise lip-synching to an art as to transform aural montage into psychodrama. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 627-2556. Closes Sept. 23.) . . . **M. BUTTERFLY:** Tony Randall has joined the cast of David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play. With B. D. Wong. (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties. With James Brennan and Judy Blazer. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** *The stars of this musical* adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **RUMORS:** This farce about a party to celebrate a couple's tenth anniversary (the host and hostess are mysteriously absent) may well be the funniest play that Neil Simon has written. It is acted to perfection by, among others, Ron Leibman, Joyce Van Patten, Charles Brown, Lisa Emery, Richard Levine, Timothy Landfield, and Cynthia Darlow, under the impeccable direction of Gene Saks. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wise-cracking chatter of the proprietress (Suzy Hunt), her assistant (Dorrie Joiner), and four steady customers (Rita Gardner, Rica Martens, Anna Minot, and Cynthia Vance). (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 246-0102.)

ROUND MIDNIGHT

At a Times Square movie house, where a midnight showing of "Friday the 13th, Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan" was getting under way, a spandex-wrapped young woman sitting in front of us told a late-arriving friend that she hadn't missed anything, just a bunch of cops who had held up the start of the movie because someone in the theatre had been shot a few minutes earlier. Across the aisle, two guys took a few moments to look at the trailer for "She-Devil" before pelting the screen and one of its stars, Roseanne Barr, with empty Diet Coke cans. After the feature came on, the routine diabolical slashings committed by the villain, Jason Voorhees, seemed no more popular than Barr.

Only once did the packed house light up as brightly as the cigarettes emitting their firefly glow from seats up and down the aisle. Jason was being pummelled by a valiant young boxer on a Manhattan rooftop when, in a stunning reversal, the bad guy administered a bearlike swipe to his opponent, knocking the man's head from his body, so that it flew off the building and into a dumpster below. The audience roared, but no one shouted as loudly as a woman behind us, who uttered the most piercing scream heard in a cinema since Alan Arkin leaped at Audrey Hepburn in "Wait Until Dark." The spandexed woman put up with this shrieking for about thirty seconds, then got up and walked back to its source. "What's the matter?" she demanded. "You never been to a movie before?"

DANCE

KABUKI is often called an actor's theatre, but its links to dance are basic, as we learned from Ennosuke Ichikawa III, the forty-nine-year-old virtuoso Kabuki actor and producer, whose Tokyo-based company opens this week at the Met. "Kabuki is built around individual performers," Ennosuke told us. "What they always focussed on was the ability to move. We have records of early Kabuki actors who were considered poor because they could only speak their lines. Movement and its visual appearance are fundamental to the art."

We spoke with Ennosuke early this summer, during a trip he made to New York to check on the complex technical details of his Met appearance. The nightly program is austerely chosen: one full-company play, "Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees," in which Ennosuke stars; and one solo dance-play for Ennosuke, "The Black Mound." But there is nothing simple or reductive about the look of either of them, and in paring the program down to three hours Ennosuke expects to keep up the tension. (In its full, eighteenth-century version, "Yoshitsune" alone plays for eleven hours; at the Met it will last an hour and a half.) There will be complex lighting illusions, special effects—Ennosuke will fly above the stage—and new, fantastical scenery conceived for the Met's vast dimensions.

As the grandson of a Kabuki master and the son of a Kabuki actor, Ennosuke is thoroughly grounded in traditional Kabuki techniques and attitudes, yet he also is one of the rare Kabuki stars to possess a university degree. His decision to accommodate Western theatre techniques—and attention spans—is made with an understanding of history and a daring intellect. The Met program represents a dozen years of research into audience response in the theatre worldwide. During his last New York stay, Ennosuke attended an all-Robbins gala at New York City Ballet. He was most enthusiastic about the "Mistake Waltz" in Robbins' "The Concert." "If the dancers are off the slightest bit, they're really off," said Ennosuke. "That's the kind of picky detail that interests me."

ENNOSUKE'S KABUKI—Presenting eight performances of "Yoshitsune and the Thousand Cherry Trees" and "The Black Mound." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Sept. 6-9 at 8, Sept. 10 at 1:30 and 7:30, and Sept. 11-12 at 8.)

JOE GOODE PERFORMANCE GROUP—A San Francisco dance company in a full-length work entitled "The Disaster Series." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Sept. 8-9 at 8, and Sept. 10 at 3. Through Sept. 17.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM AT EQUITABLE CENTER—Sept. 5: Karen Pearlman and Richard Allen. . . . ¶ Sept. 12: Bill Young & Dancers. (Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. Evenings at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

NOTE—The organization called Dancing in the Streets is sponsoring a series of four free outdoor performances, with the first two on Sept. 7-8 at 7 at the Bethesda Terrace in Central Park. Sara Pearson and Susan Marshall will present dance works, and Robert Een will play original cello pieces.

NIGHT LIFE

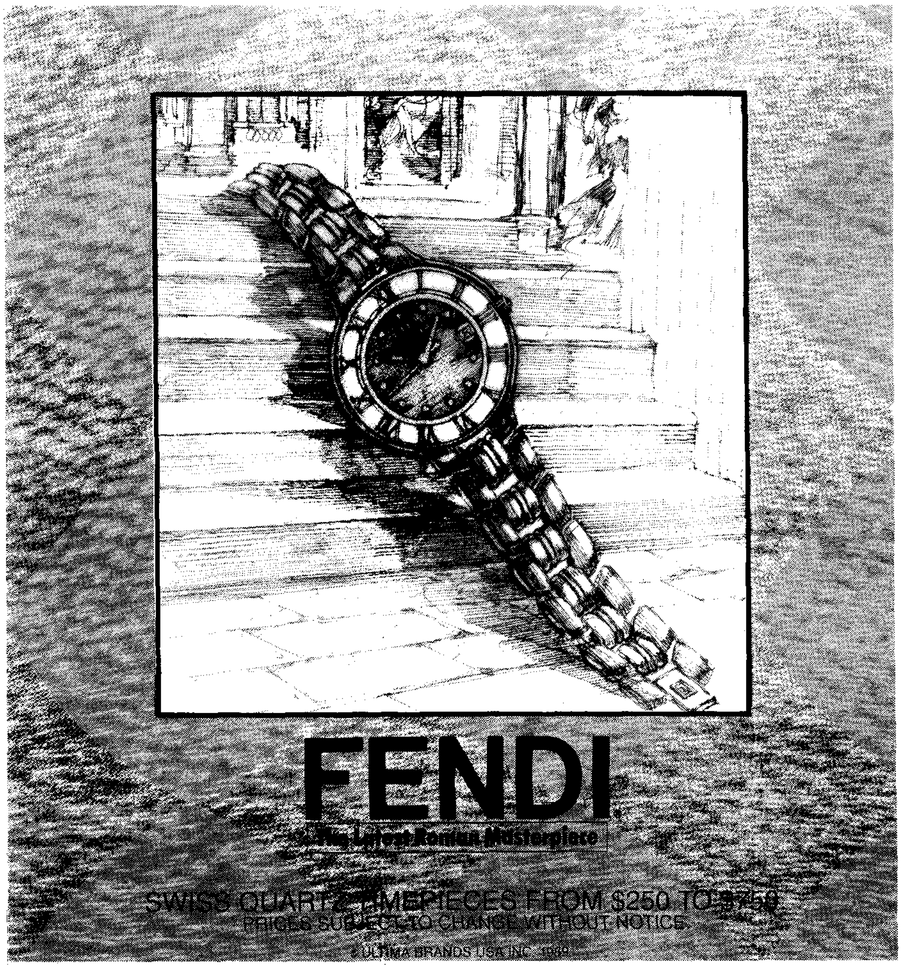
WAITING in line to see Les Paul at Fat Tuesday's the other night, we had the same sinking feeling that we'd had while queuing up for the Hearst Castle tour or for the boat to the Statue of Liberty. It didn't improve matters when we were corralled over to a cramped little table, where we were informed by our neighbor, a beefy, perspiring young man in a cut-rate business suit, that we would have to move over because we were crowding his meat hooks. Les Paul's ritual Monday-night show at Fat Tuesday's has become something of a tourist spectacle, but, like many tourist events, this show has its rewards.

The book on Les Paul goes something like this: he's an electronics wizard, who pioneered the solid-body electric guitar, reverb, and multitrack recording; he became famous in the early fifties with a string of hits recorded with his wife, Mary Ford; he retired in the sixties, because of poor health; and he began a limited engagement at Fat Tuesday's in 1984, and was such a hit that he never left. Paul is accompanied by a rhythm guitarist and a standup bassist, and his material is a combination of jazz, country, blues, and pop standards—"Georgia," "Moonglow," "Caravan," "Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home." But because his inventions paved the way for electric music, Paul has a devoted following of rock fans. Though we didn't see any of the rock stars who have been known to show up, there was an impromptu jam session with a guitarist whom Paul had met before the show, an eager teenager with a heavy-metal mane and slick new-wave clothing. "Blues in C Sharp," the young man called out as he strapped on his guitar, a glen-plaid Ibanez with a drawing of a naked woman on the back. Then the two guitarists traded solos—Paul with his pure, clear tone, and the challenger with a wailing post-Van Halen overdrive that Les Paul, like it or not, had helped make possible.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The Oak Room is getting better oak. Much of the Algonquin Hotel, in fact, is undergoing a sort of retro makeover: there will be a round table again in the Rose Room, forties-style chandeliers in the lobby, a conference suite on the second floor named after Helen Hayes, and an English-pub-style retreat at street level. The entranceway to the Oak Room itself will get its old arched transom back, and its ceiling will be higher and acoustically superior. On Sept. 13, **MONTGOMERY, PLANT & STRITCH** give the refurbished night spot a musical bon voyage with the first show of a four-week engagement. Shows at nine-fifteen Tuesdays through Saturdays. Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A big, soigné cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, in the heart of the fur and fashion-student districts. Singer and Broadway habitué Christine Andreas is in residence through Sept. 9. **HELEN SCHNEIDER**—a Brooklyn-born blues singer who had a one-woman show called "A Flapper's Folly" a few years back—comes in at eleven to sing Sondheim Sept. 8-9, and, starting Sept. 13, she has her run of the place.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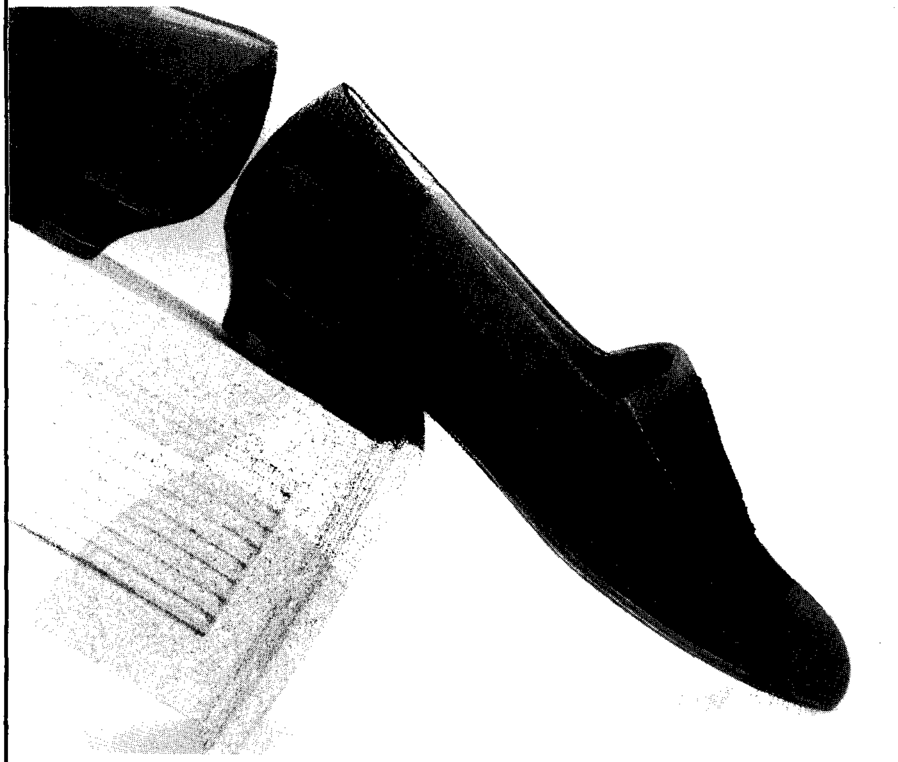

A CERTAIN WORLD WALKS IN ROSSETTI

601 Madison Avenue (57 st.) New York, NY 10022 (212) 888-5107

Miles Davis at Indigo Blues

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The jazz personnel turns over nearly every night at this airy, loftlike restaurant-bar, in the gray zone between Zabar's and Columbia. Some may cry "Gentrification!" at the sight of the pastel walls, the potted greenery, and the bar crowded with Frascati sippers, but even the sniffy will agree that the floor-to-ceiling windows make for some fine Broadway-viewing. Pianist Fred Hersch, a romantic who's not afraid of a little body language, leads a trio on Sept. 6. Tenor-sax man **Bill Barron** fronts a quartet (with brother **Kenny Barron** at the piano) Sept. 7; a quartet belonging to saxophonist **George Coleman** holds forth Sept. 8-9; and David Janeway's quintet will be here Sept. 10. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

Bitter End, 149 Bleecker St. (673-7030)—The free passes to this club could pave most of Greenwich Village, and they often do. The Bitter End was all abuzz in the seventies when it was a stopping point for the sort of singers whose records you can now order from television: Gordon Lightfoot, Melissa Manchester, and Neil Sedaka among them. Aside from the rest rooms, which are what you'd expect to find during wartime, the place is pleasant enough. There's an Atari video game constantly aglow in the corner, a platinum record from Blood, Sweat, & Tears, and a doorman who, when you ask what time the band's coming on, will tell you anything you want to hear.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A jazz club that would be a perfect stop on a bus tour. (There's even a souvenir shop that sells Kodak film.) It's a good idea to make a reservation and show up well in advance. Sept. 5-10, Cuban saxophonist **Paquito D'Rivera** and his Havana-New York Ensemble will be tossing off merengues and sambas, not to mention a good deal of hard-headed bop. Drummer **Max Roach's** Double Quartet starts up on Sept. 12. First set at nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. The walls and columns are basic black with some rainbow detailing here and there—the place looks a little like the outside of a van. If you end up without a seat, you can stand at the bar—finally, a club where they don't force you to drink—and mull over photographs from great shows you've missed. Betty, a three-woman a-cappella outfit, will be here Sept. 7; and, Sept. 10-13, the stage belongs to **Terri Lyne Carrington.** Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar, tucked between a D'Agostino supermarket and a greengrocery. In 1969, when Bradley Cunningham and a partner bought it, it was called the Stirrup. Its light is distinctive, something between dim generic tavern light and refined haze; its patrons are famously gabby; its piano, which Paul Desmond bequeathed to Mr. Cunningham, has been played by many first-rate musicians, including Jimmy Rowles, Tommy Flanagan, and Dave McKenna. Pianist **Walter Davis, Jr.,** who once gave up music for tailoring then thought better of it, will be here Sept. 4-9; Mike LeDonne comes in on Sept. 10; and pianist **John Hicks** starts up on Sept. 11. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Cat Club, 76 E. 13th St. (505-0090)—This room, which caters to thrash-metal buffs and cooler heads on weeknights, opens its doors on Sundays to swing-music fans, most of whom come to Lindy. The dancers are young, old, middle-aged, semi-pro, one hundred per cent amateur, happy, earnest, in love; shoe styles (men's) run from white bucks to clodhoppers to gleaming patent-leather jobs. Music from eight to midnight.

Dan Lynch, 221 Second Ave., at 14th St. (677-0911)—Outside Dan Lynch, you'll come across a lot of suspicious characters who'll claim to know you; inside you'll find a pupil-dilating, brown-on-brown bar decorated with an Aretha poster and the remnants of a birch tree. The place brightens up considerably at ten with a variety of live blues, including vamps of the "put on your red dress" variety.

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A long, rambling bar and restaurant with a white-trash-chicken-shack theme. The decorator went kind of hog-wild with all the old filling-station and soft-drink signs and the hubcaps and the dime-store portrait of the King and the display of dozer caps and the shingle from the taxidermist in Spanish Fort, Alabama—but it's a friendly enough place. There's live music most nights, including gospel on Mondays, zydeco (in the form of **Loup Garou**) on Thursdays, and country on Fridays. Shows after nine. Chicken-fried steak, deep-fried crawdads (a.k.a. Cajun popcorn), and other exotic Southern fare.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—There's not a lot of elbow- or head-room in this downstairs jazz club, but the musicians sometimes make you forget all about it. The jazz people: **John Abercrombie,** a light-fingered guitarist from whom you might hear "All the Things You Are" or "My Funny Valentine," plays with a quartet Sept. 5-10. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **Les Paul,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Fortune Garden Pavilion, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—A satisfying combination of Chinese food and homegrown music. Rubberneckers may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its regular tour of romantic Manhattan. The pianists who pass through here are among Gotham's finest. **John Bunch,** who longs for the days when big bands roamed the earth, works the Steinway Sept. 5-10; Irving Fields performs on Sept. 11; and former Muzak vice-president Jane Jarvis, who spent eight years as an organist for the Milwaukee Braves before getting traded to the Mets, starts up on Sept. 12. Music from eight Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

Greene Street, 101 Greene St. (925-2415)—This is such a gorgeous, thirties-ish, movie set of a place, you expect gunmen to burst in at any moment. The restaurant and bar—forested and twilit—is about the size of a football field, with the piano at the fifty-yard line. If your seats are good enough, you'll hear some able entertainers, including **Pete Malinverni** (Sept. 5-6); **Lynn Bernstein** (Sept. 7-9); **Andy Laverne** (Sept. 11); and **Hal Schaefer** (Sept. 12-16.)

Indigo Blues, 221 W. 46th St. (221-0033)—A sleek, modern jazz club, in the basement of the Hotel Edison, with glass brick, space-age carpeting, and long strips of cool-blue neon. If you go back in the history books far enough, you can read about a time when **Miles Davis** was shy. Since then, an astonishing Who's Who of musicians have performed in his funk outfits—at piano, for instance, the list includes Keith Jarrett, Herbie Hancock, and Chick Corea—and Davis has been acknowledged as the first person since Louis Armstrong to reinvent the trumpet. The musician's disdain for night clubs—and many other things—is well documented, but he christened this room late last year, and he'll return to it Sept. 7-10.

Jan Wallman's, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A burgundy room walled with mirrors that gives one the not unpleasant sensation of sitting in a giant glass of red wine. **Barbara Lea,** a free and easy singer with a whistle that could knock a bird out of a tree, will perform with pianist-in-residence **Wes Mc Afee** on Sept. 9. Evan Matthews will be here on Sept. 11, with **David Lahm** on the bench. Shows at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—An Old New York kind of place, with dark-wood panelling, white tablecloths, and brass-figurine lamps. The musicians gather around the Steinway that sits in the dining room, next to a brass-railed partition, but chin music is often the dominant sound. **Junior Mance,** one-time Dinah Washington sidekick and author of "How to Play Blues Piano," works with bassist **Marty Rivera** Sept. 5-9, and Sept. 12-16. Music from nine-thirty.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—The façade is a Silver Eagle bus, the kind your itinerant musician cat tools around in. The inside features some stuff you probably wouldn't find in a county-line roadhouse—like a wallful of de-luxe Gibson guitars—and some you might expect to find: beer, neon beer signs, and men wearing dozer caps. Many years ago, **Dr. John,** the son of a New Orleans appliance-store owner, got shot in the finger during a Louisiana barroom brawl. More recently, he released a fine, breezy album of standards—including a "Makin' Whoopee" duet with Rickie Lee Jones—and signed on for gigs here Sept. 6-7. On Sept. 11, R. & B. revivalist **Ruth Brown** takes a night off from her Broadway baby, "Black and Blue." Music after nine. Dining.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A midtown restaurant and jazz lair for the tasselled-loafers set. The dark, sombre bar (carved-wood lions, iron grillwork) looks like a place you'd find in London's financial district; the dining room—putting-green carpet, lime-green leather banquettes, panelled ceiling—has more of a country-club feel. Through Sept. 9, **Frank Gorshin,** the actor who played the Riddler on the "Batman" TV series, shares a few impressions—including one of Jack Nicholson. Sept. 8 at 9 and Sept. 9 at 9 and 11, **Joan Rivers** will find out what people are laughing at these days. Closed Sundays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—**Mc Coy Tyner,** a high-impact pianist who once told a reporter, "When you're knee-deep in something, you have to get deeper," performs in this Village temple of jazz (pressed-tin ceiling, grainy b. & w. photos of your favorite demigods, knee-to-knee seating) Sept. 5-10, and will be here again beginning Sept. 12. The electrified big band that the late Gil Evans brought here on Mondays—it shimmered a little and rumbled a lot, while Evans, a hands-off conductor, let his soloists blow at length—is now under the direction of his son, trumpeter Miles Evans, and is in action on Mondays. Shows from ten. Dining.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room, which, with

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

its black walls, black pillars, and black pipes and ducts, resembles a giant Louise Nevelson sculpture, salsa bands pack them in on Mondays. Brazilian singer-pianist **TANIA MARIA** will be performing Sept. 8-9, and **SID CAESAR'S** comedy revue runs through Sept. 10. . . . ¶ One flight up, in the airy space known as the Terrace Bar, the piano-bass action looks like this: Sharon Freeman and Mike Richmond (Sept. 5-10); **MIKE LONGO,** who used to ride the bench for Dizzy Gillespie, and Ben Brown (Sept. 12-24).

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world descend the stairs to this ancient jazz club; many of them later emerge from it in an excited condition. Sept. 5 belongs to a brash young jazz collective known as the Harper Brothers; and George Adams, a formidable reedman who has referred to his tenor sax as a weapon, leads a quartet on Sept. 12. Mondays are prime time for **MEL LEWIS'S** big band. Music from ten.

VISIONES, 125 Macdougal St., at Bleecker St. (673-5576)—A tapas-and-flan concern, with a room for jazz. It's not a glamorous spot—unless you like framed puzzles—but the globe-trotting musicians who lay over here are worth watching. Guitarist **SAL SALVADOR** performs on Sept. 5.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—If you like pictures of cows, there's a good one here, by the British painter Malcolm Morley, of some Holsteins adrift in a Turneresque landscape. There's also jazz, which flows peaceably from a passageway between the front-room bar and the back-room restaurant. Guitarist **TAL FARLOW,** a sixty-something jazz legend who likes to retire every once in a while, performs with bassist **GARY MAZZAROPPI** Sept. 5-9, and then again beginning Sept. 11. Music weeknights from eight, and Sundays from seven.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

NONE of them talk about it. You won't catch them gloating over it. And if you brought the subject up they'd probably deny it. But there's a subtle kind of vengeance that those who don't go away for the weekend wreak on those who do, just to keep things even. It's called Disappearance on Sunday Night.

If you leave Columbia County, Fire Island, or Amagansett any time after five, chances are you won't get back to New York City before dark. After two and a half days of sharing a bathroom with your favorite half- and quarter-shares, going to cocktail parties you know you shouldn't but know you should, or perhaps fertilizing a patch of tomatoes that produces a bounty you can't possibly consume, and then living through a journey back to the city that would make Charon weak, all you want is the pleasure of one friendly, slightly unfamiliar face you can commiserate with.

But, as sure as your getting in the wrong line at the toll booths, when you dial everyone on Sunday night who didn't cross a river over the weekend, you get recording after recording. Are they all at Mars, the Odeon, Lola's, up in Harlem at La Famille? Are they all at the same party and no one bothered to invite you? You haven't a clue. You finally take the Arts and Leisure section to the nearest trattoria and read none of it, pondering instead never taking another share, and cursing yourself for not phoning ahead.

The next morning, when friends return your call, they ask, "So, how was the weekend?" You're feeling so abandoned and unloved you say, "It was all right. Let's do something fun tonight!" Only a desperate person would forget that finding fun on a Monday night in New York is tougher than getting the last half-sandwich in that house where you have a quarter-share. They agree to check their calendars and call you right back. Think this isn't deliberate?

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—
PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"ROOM AND BOARD"—A play about a sick mother-daughter relationship, written by Madeleine Olnek and starring Kimberly Flynn. (Theatre Club Funambles, 167 Ludlow St., between E. Houston and Stanton Sts. 420-1466. Sept. 6-10 and Sept. 13 at 8. Through Sept. 17.)

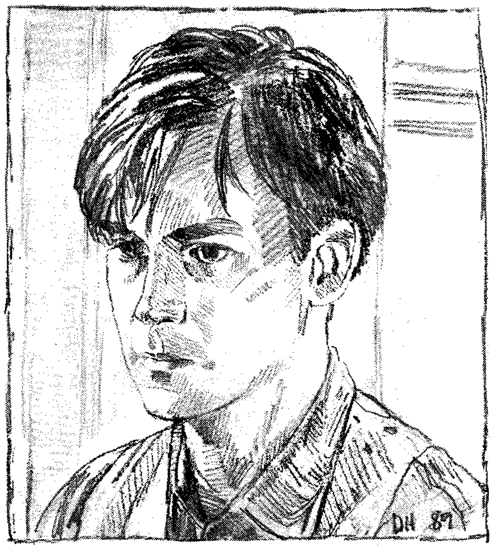
"FRANK DELL'S THE TEMPTATION OF ST. ANTHONY"—This Wooster Group production, performed by six live actors and by three more on video, is, according to a Wooster Group spokesperson, "about death or about the end of something." Critics have called it "multimedia vaudeville" and "a Dadaist collage." Who can say? With M. A. Hestand, Peyton Smith, Jeff Webster, Kate Valk, and others. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Thursdays through Sundays at 8.)

PATTI DOBROWOLSKI—In "Inside Out," this performance artist from Seattle plays your average psychotherapy patient who feels messed up by your average psychotherapist. Featured props are a lounge chair and a plastic rocking horse on springs. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Sept. 11 at 8.)

P.S. 122—Sept. 7-10 at 9:30: Frank Maya in rants about Liza Minnelli, Entenmann's baked goods, and his shrink. Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ Sept. 8-10 at 8: Eric Bogosian tries out new material. . . . ¶ Sept. 8-9 at 11: Leigh Clark re-creates her character LuRain Penny, an aging torch singer. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

MAESTRO

The ability to amuse commuters is presumably not a requirement for the job of subway conductor, but every now and then you come across one who, bucking the handbook, transforms his phone-booth-size cubicle into a mobile broadcast studio. We thought we might have run across one of these curiosities the other day when, shortly after boarding an uptown No. 1 train, we heard the announcement "Twenty-eighth is next. Excellent for the flower district, excellent for the fur district." At 34th Street, any doubts about our find were dispelled. "This is the No. 1 train on its way to Van Cortlandt Park," our man said in a cheerful, slightly ironic tone. "Join us if you can find room. It would be helpful if you could take your whole anatomy with you when you board the train." Our last stop was 86th Street, and as we made our way down the platform we spotted the conductor, in his booth: a middle-aged man with thinning white hair and owl-like features, dressed in a regulation M.T.A. uniform accessorized with a blue-bandanna cravat. "There's a menace in the area," he said into the microphone as we walked by. "The celebrated Mannes College of Music."



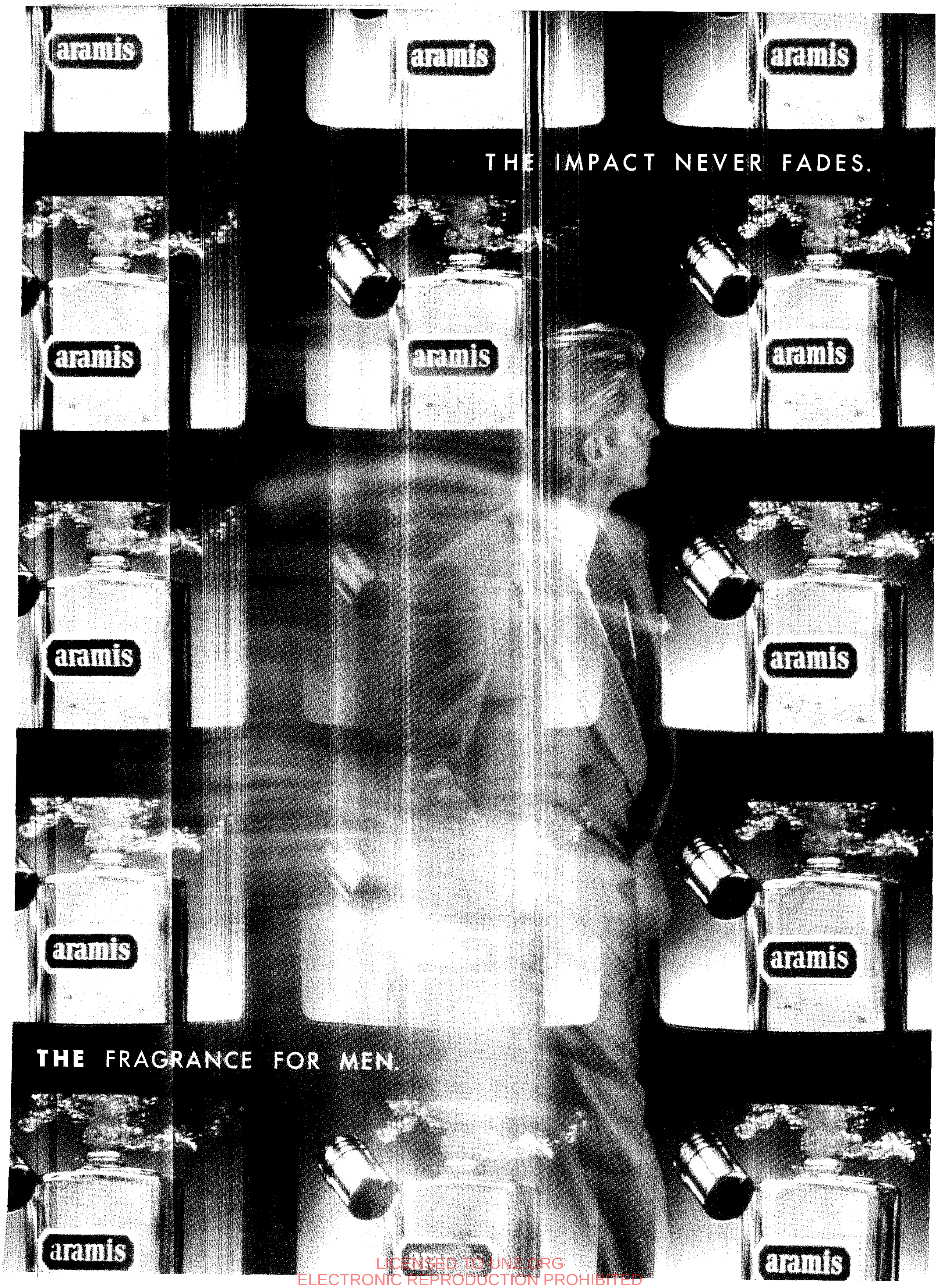
Self-portrait by Duncan Hannah

ART

A LOT of Lucas Samaras's work on paper is decidedly labor-intensive. We may tend to forget this, compelled as we are by the artist's eccentric, sometimes kinky sensibility, and by the fascination of the simultaneously seductive and repulsive attributes of so many of the objects he makes. A small, tight show of thirty-six works on paper by Samaras—now at the Met, in a gallery of the Wallace Wing usually occupied by the currently touring Berggruen Collection, of works by Paul Klee—includes many sharp reminders of the artist's urge to work. The exhibition does include a key Polaroid opus, but is otherwise given over to drawings, along with a couple of constructions. There are, for instance, several Pointillist pen-and-ink portraits from 1986 that might make you think of Chuck Close on fast forward, and which complement the actual pinpoints in some boxed assemblages. There's a bunch of abstract, optical, rather orphic Precisionist drawings from 1966 that recall the Russian brothers Pevsner and Gabo, or computer graphics—or Sol LeWitt on speed. Throughout the show we feel the lucid, difficult, perverse presence of this most intelligent artist, who—not unlike M. C. Escher—holds a vision that is at once cosmic and intensely claustrophobic.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

AUDUBON TERRACE—This configuration of Beaux Arts buildings at Broadway and 155th St.—including the Hispanic Society of America, the Museum of the American Indian, the American Numismatic Society, the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and a branch of Boricua College—was designed by Charles P. Huntington, nephew of Archer Milton Huntington, who founded the Hispanic Society, and his wife, Anna Hyatt Huntington, a sculptor best known for her *animalier* themes. (Her statue of El Cid Campeador stands in the middle of the square.) The Hispanic Society in its evocative sleepiness remains an especially charismatic presence. There's a cryptlike space filled with alabaster tomb sculptures of a wrenching formality, case after case of sumptuous Hispano-Moresque lustreware, and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THE IMPACT NEVER FADES.
THE FRAGRANCE FOR MEN.

J. COCTEAU
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marvellous *vargueños*—desks whose elaborate inside ornamentation includes high-baroque architectural façades and twisting ivory columns. Despite some suspicious attributions, there's also an impressive collection of paintings by Spanish masters, including a portrait by Goya of the dour Duchess of Alba (who points to the artist's signature, etched in the ground); Velázquez's forceful portrait of the Count-Duke of Olivares, a power behind the throne of Philip IV (the artist's patron); and a version of "Juan de Pareja" (after Velázquez's portrait at the Met) believed by some to have been executed by the subject. The Hispanic Society's main-floor room is a gem, with highly theatrical murals depicting the customs and costumes of the Spanish provinces, by Joaquím Sorolla y Bastida—rival to Zuloaga, Boldini, and Singer Sargent for the role of society Impressionist of the day. While you are on Audubon Terrace, you might visit the American Numismatic Society for a hardy sampling of military medalry, and a mini-history of coinage which begins with a spiral money ring from the period of Nushi-i Jan (seventh century B.C.) and ends with R. C. Robbins' Diners Club card (member since 1982). And do not further neglect the Museum of the American Indian. With a troubled past, what remains of its encyclopedic collection—whatever has survived mold, bugs, and curatorial plunder—will be shifting before long to the Smithsonian, though an exhibitions program will continue at the Custom House in downtown Manhattan.

Morris-Jumel Mansion, Jumel Terrace and 161 St.—You used to be able to see the Hudson and Harlem Rivers from the hilltop aerie of the Morris-Jumel Mansion, a house built in 1765 whose grounds encompassed one hundred and thirty acres for more than a century. The house contains what is reputed to be the first octagonal room in the Colonies, above which was General George Washington's military headquarters during the Battle of Harlem Heights. In the nineteenth century, the room was occupied by the notorious Mme. Jumel—a friend of Patrick Henry *and* of Mrs. Benedict Arnold, and, later, the wife of Aaron Burr (the former Vice-President squandered much of her fortune). When Mme. Jumel couldn't persuade Napoleon to retire to America after Waterloo, she travelled to Paris and returned with the fallen leader's bed, which is still in this bedroom, along with other fine period pieces. The house also boasts some great period reproduction wallpapers, a centuries-old forerunner of linoleum, and Mme. Jumel's garters. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 10 to 4.)

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—The name game has brought the museum an astonishing range of new displays in the past few years: in the Charlotte C. and John C. Weber Galleries of the Arts of Ancient China, for example, there is an exquisite if modest showcase for many of the museum's fine Chinese ceramics, bronzes, and jades, spanning the six millenia from the Neolithic Age through the Tang dynasty. . . . ¶ The Henry R. Luce Center for the Study of American Art, located in the American Wing, displays the bulk of the Met's fourteen thousand American objects in glass storage cases with obsessive order. Sleek Frank Lloyd Wright tables sit near gloppy Victorian extravaganzas; dozens of Federal dining-room chairs are lined up in order of size; fanciful mirrors, painted Pennsylvania-German chests, scores of Tiffany vases, hundreds of colored bottles, and enough silver to serve the city amount to an encyclopedia of furnishings brought to life. . . . ¶ More like a bald pate than a planted penthouse, the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Roof Garden, atop the Lila Acheson Wallace Wing of Twentieth Century Art, is ideal for the kind of nonobjective sculpture currently on display there, such as David Smith's "Becca" and Reuben Nakian's "Garden of the Gods I." From this unadorned treetop perch, the enormousness of the museum drops away, and what remains is a spectacular panorama of Central Parks West and South, and of Fifth Avenue. . . . ¶ "Italian Majolica," an exhibition that offers a neatly telescoped history of late-Quattrocento and Cinquecento art, and includes a variety of extraordinary objects. Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ Thirty-six works on paper, by Lucas Samaras. . . . ¶ "Invention and Continuity in Contemporary Photographs." Through Oct. 8. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—An installation by Matt Mullican of computer-based works. Through Oct. 24. . . . ¶ A show of Cubist prints. Through Nov. 7. . . . ¶ Photographs by Aaron Siskind from the permanent collection. Through Oct. 10. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum will be closed until Sept. 28.

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A current show, of works acquired over the past fifteen years, provides a fascinating example of institutional collecting. In early-twentieth-century art, the focus has been on artists such as Elie Nadelman, who is represented by some major pieces, and Georgia O'Keeffe, who is represented by some weak ones, and on a number of finely selected drawings and watercolors. Contemporary holdings include quintessential works by Joel Shapiro and Elizabeth Murray, for example, acquired in the late seventies, and a diptych by Eric Fischl, from the mid-eighties. In the past few years the museum's purchases have become fewer and, with such works as Tony Smith's important sculpture "Die" and an Eva Hesse rope piece, have focussed on historical gaps. Through Oct. 15. . . . ¶ A show of oils, watercolors, prints, and drawings by Edward Hopper. The hundred and fifty works span the artist's career, and are drawn from the museum's collection. Through Nov. 5. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Whitney Museum Downtown, 33 Maiden Lane—"The Desire of the Museum": This provocative show, organized by student curators, presents the institution of "the museum" as a living entity, with its own set of desires and unspoken agendas. It does not include some of the better-known artistic examinations of the museum frame, by such artists as Claes Oldenburg, Marcel Broodthaers, and Michael Asher. It does feature a Marcel Duchamp piece, which contains reproductions of the master gamesman's ready-mades; Richard Artschwager's hairy rubber blips, which are strategically installed in unexpected locations; Hans Haacke's portrait of the extra-aesthetic life of Seurat's "Les Poseuses"; and Mark Dion and Jason Simon's tales of pictures that were badly damaged or painted and then economically revitalized through conservationist cunning. The curators try to push their point too far with gimmicky interventions (including die-cut questions beside the art works, such as "What does the museum want?"), but this show—which also includes Guerrilla Girls' posters, Allan McCollum's painted surrogates, Louise Lawler's photo wall labels, and more—is long overdue. Through Sept. 12. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 11 to 6.)

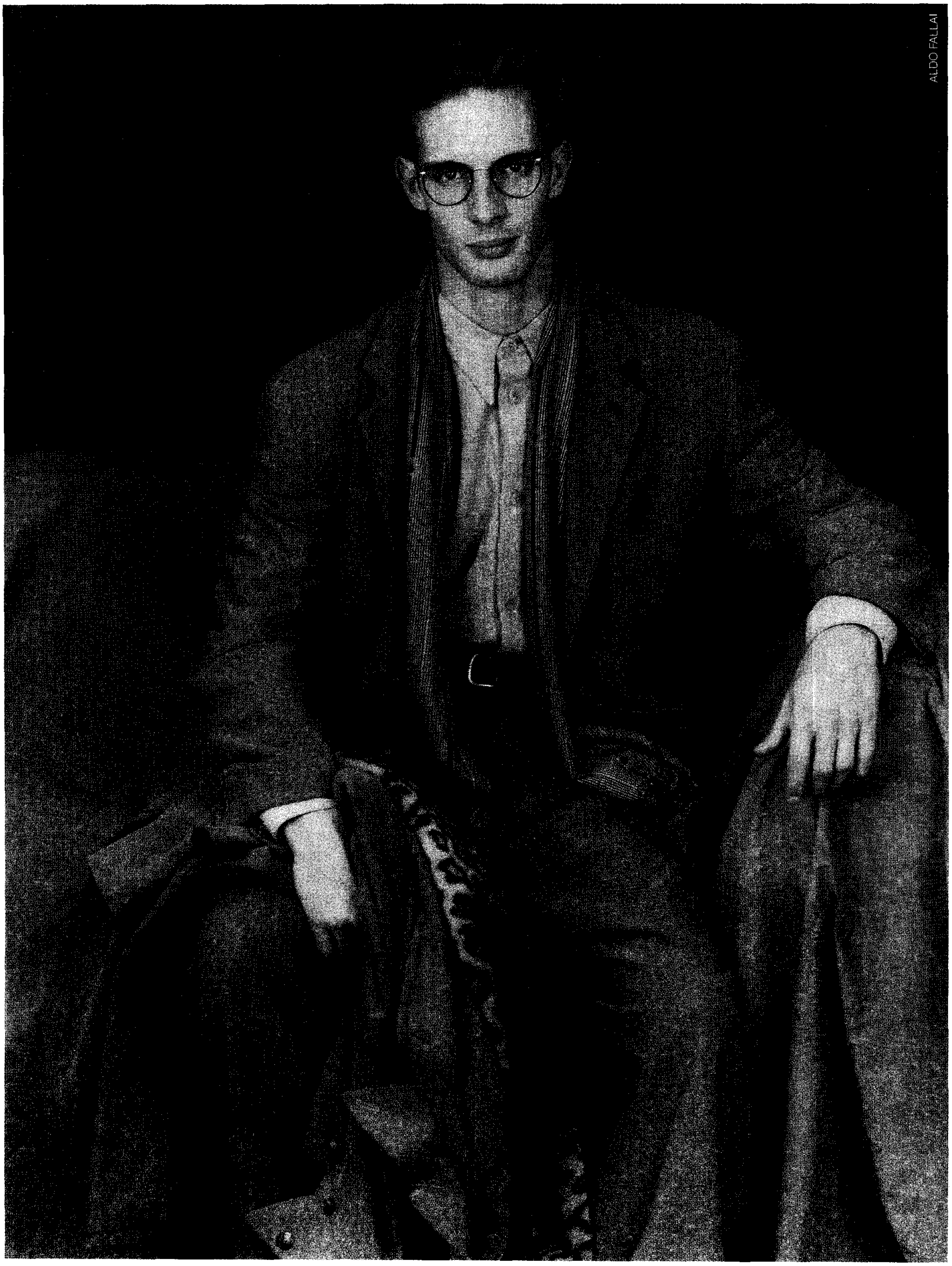
Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Andrew Wyeth: The Helga Pictures." Through Sept. 18. . . . ¶ An exhibition of thirty Mughal paintings—miniatures, mostly, in opaque watercolors and ink on paper—tracing changes in the style from the late-fifteenth century to the eighteenth. Through Nov. 6. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A display of Saudi Arabian dress in which traditional *thawbs*, for instance, are seen alongside a cloak that belonged to King Faisal. Through Oct. 29. (Open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—"Rain of Talent: Umbrella Art": A mild drizzle of some thirty altered umbrellas suspended from the ceiling of the main stairwell. The talents include Rhonda Zwillinger, Kim MacConnel, Robert Venturi, Betty Woodman, and Rodney Alan Greenblat. Through Sept. 24. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Bronx Museum of the Arts, 1040 Grand Concourse—Red Grooms' work is about as close as art gets to real entertainment, and his graphic work—the subject of this exhibition—is no exception. The show includes some delightful three-dimensional lithographs that resemble permanently opened pop-up books. Through Sept. 10. (Open weekdays, except Fridays, 10 to 4:30; Sundays, 11 to 4:30.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Nineteenth-century jewelry from the museum's collection. A well-presented, spiffy little show that is organized in neat categories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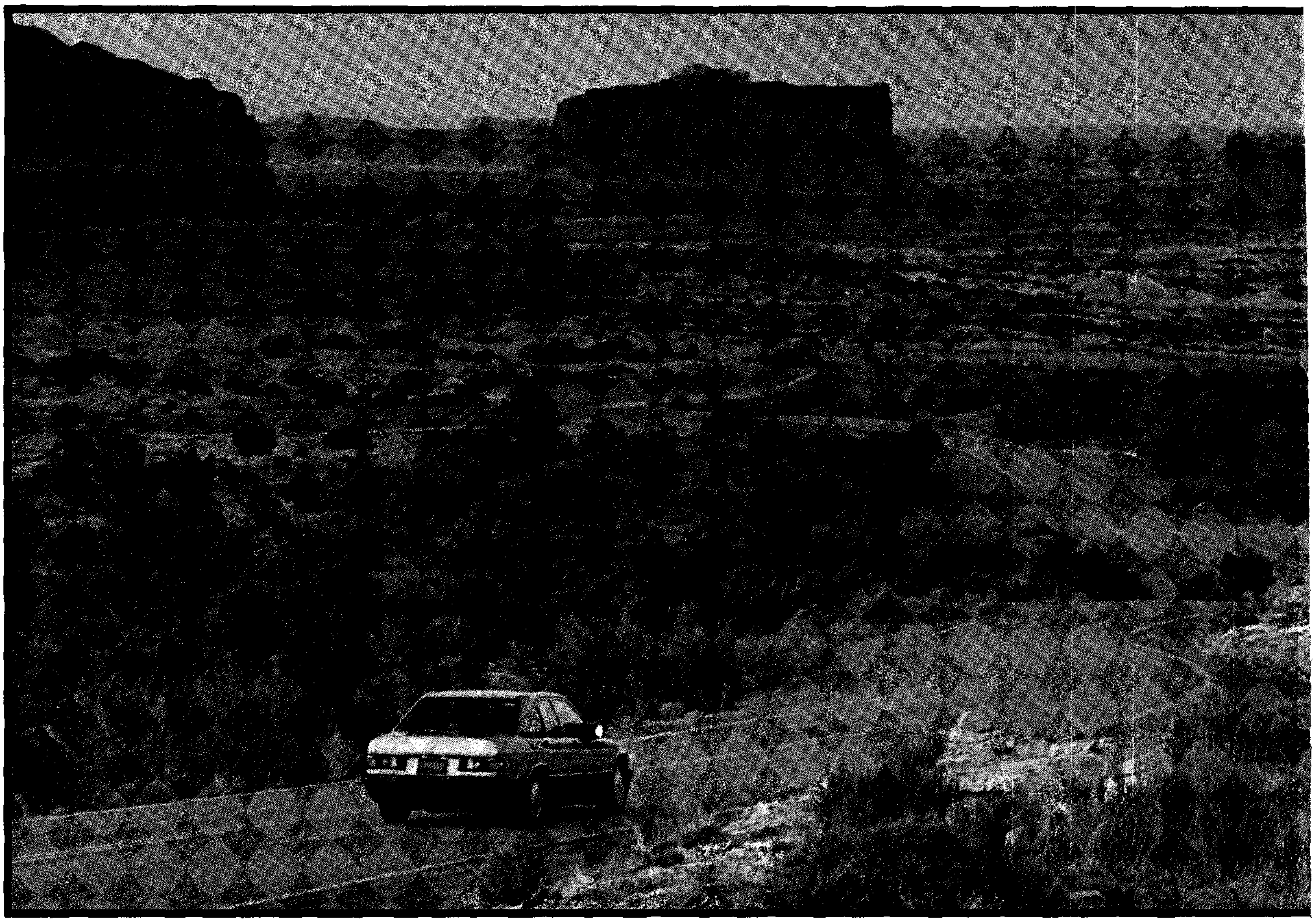

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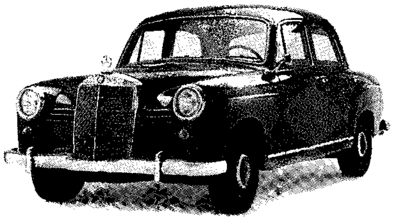

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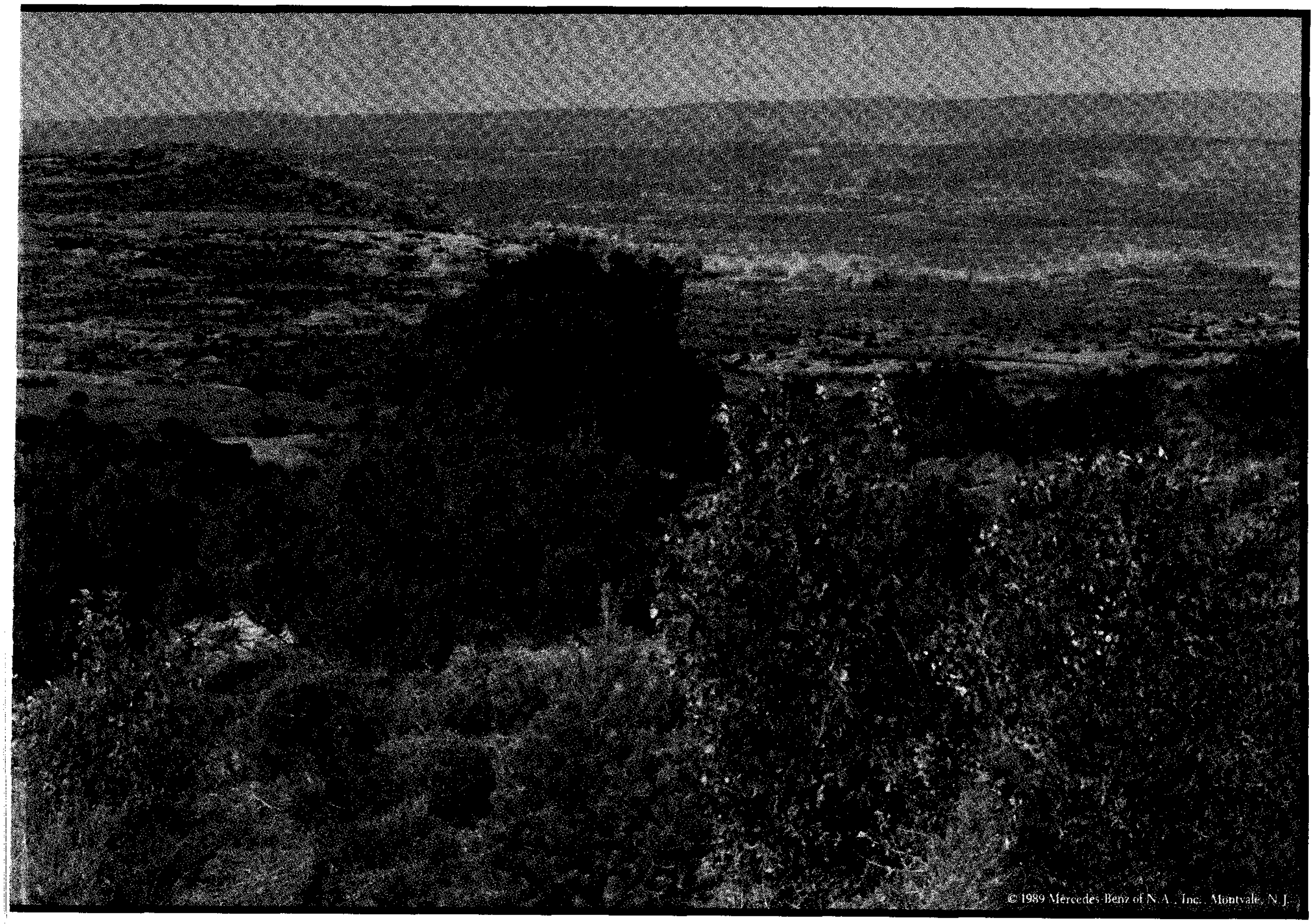

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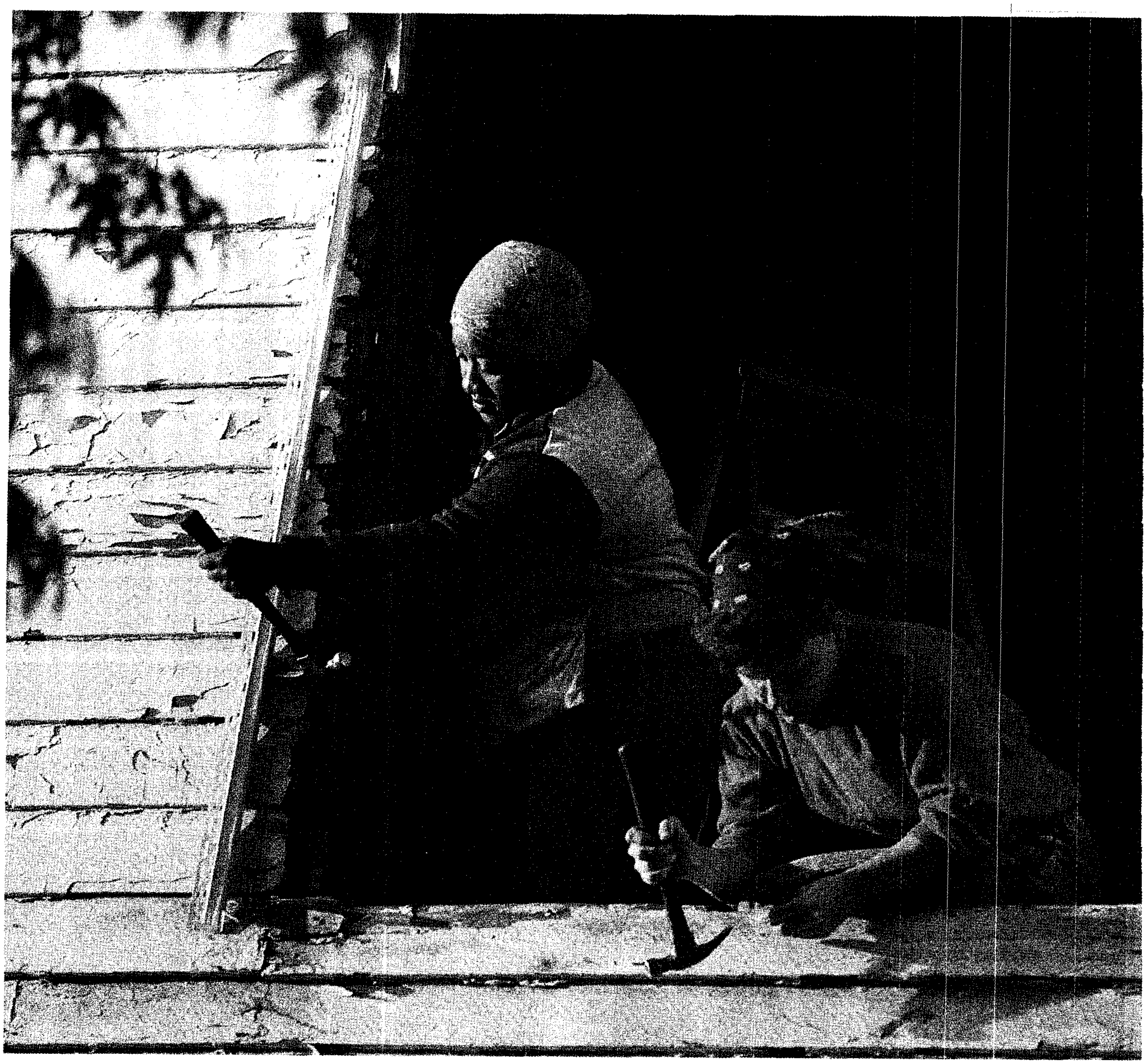

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appropriate to the categorical imperatives of the Victorian period: materials and techniques peculiar to the age, such as tortoise-shell and human hair, filigree and *pietra dura;* preoccupations, such as flowers and other natural specimens; revivalism, especially of styles of the then newly excavated ancient world; and jeweller-stars of the day, in particular Giuliano (who worked in London) and the influential Castellani (of Rome and Naples), both of whom popularized neo-Etruscan and neoclassical designs. . . . ¶ Views of Rome: drawings of the eternal city in its semi-rustic state. Most are from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From the Thomas Ashby collection in the Vatican Library. A quality yawn. Through Oct. 29. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from 5 to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Exodus and Exile: 2,000 Years in Ancient Israel," an archeological exhibition tracing some of the cultural shifts and political cataclysms between 1200 B.C.E. and 600 C.E. that, bit by bit, transformed the Israelite kingdom into an international religious community—the birth, in short, of Jewish indentity in the modern sense. A few objects, such as ancient mosaics and synagogue reliefs, have not been seen in this country before, and while they represent a fragmented and elusive story the show's attractive, playful installation is informative. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—A show paying tribute to Jean Cocteau on his centenary. Included are letters and drawings by the author and artist, and a marble portrait bust by Jacques Lipchitz. Through Nov. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Stitched from the Soul: Slave Textiles from the Ante-Bellum South." This fascinating exhibition demonstrates that slaves preserved fragments of their African heritage in their quilts by combining native patterns, colors, and appliqué techniques with requisite Euro-American motifs. This display of quilts is double-edged: the most delicate ones were made by slaves for their mistresses, with whom they were often drawn into close and complicated relationships, while quiltmaking by slaves for their own use formed a fulcrum of their social life. Through Sept. 17. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—This first retrospective of the well-regarded African-American painter Hughie Lee-Smith includes some moving and unusual portraits of isolation, made in the fifties, that call to mind Marsh, Tooker, and the early Guston, and sixties works depicting isolated figures next to metal poles with colored ribbons flapping from them. In the seventies and eighties, the subtle surrealist cast fades and a relatively ordinary urban realism remains. . . . ¶ Graphics and installations that incorporate photography, the work of fifteen contemporary artists. Both shows through Sept. 24. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Jene Highstein / Mike Glier—Highstein's art is rooted in the situational sculpture of the early seventies, but here at Wave Hill, in this ideally sited indoor-outdoor display of work from the past five years, the artist's interest in traditional sculpture-making predominates. Sometimes the artist's debt to Noguchi is too strong, but Highstein can also fashion an awkward, chunky shape into a breathing entity that transcends its material. Through Oct. 8. / Glier's luscious, moody landscapes, in what was once a formal dining room, establish him as today's great baroque wall decorator. Through Dec. 31. (Wave Hill, Independence Ave. at 249th St., the Bronx.)

"China—June 4, 1989..."—The Asian American Arts Centre has responded to the brutal military force used against protesting students in Tiananmen Square with a video program of television news documentaries in English, Cantonese, and Mandarin; an exhibition of vivid photographs of the student hunger strike and subsequent violence; and an evolving "Artist Wall," a folding screen that is being made from doors and decorated by interested artists. The most compelling work on it looks like a metal prison door with a map of China behind a barred window. Through Sept. 29. (26 Bowery.)

New Shows—**Stan Brodsky,** Kelly, 591 Broadway (starts Sept. 8); **Petah Coyne,** Shainman, 560 Broadway (starts Sept. 7); **Sam Francis,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (starts Sept. 7); **Elliott Green,** Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. (starts Sept. 7); **Raymond Han,** Schoelkopf, 50 W. 57th St. (starts Sept. 9); **Duncan Hannah,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through Sept. 30); **Joe Jones,** Kennedy, 40 W. 57th St. (starts Sept. 9); **Robert Jordan,** French, 41 W. 57th St. (starts Sept. 6); **Stephanie Kirschen-Cole,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. (starts Sept. 6); **Paul Laffoley,** Kent, 41 E. 57th St. (through Oct. 7); **Sherrie Levine,** Boone, 417 West Broadway (starts Sept. 9); **Robert Mangold,** Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (starts Sept. 8); **Hannah Wilke,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. (starts Sept. 9); **Philip Wofford,** Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St. (through Oct. 14); **Kes Zapkus,** Weber, 142 Greene St. (starts Sept. 9).

PHOTOGRAPHY

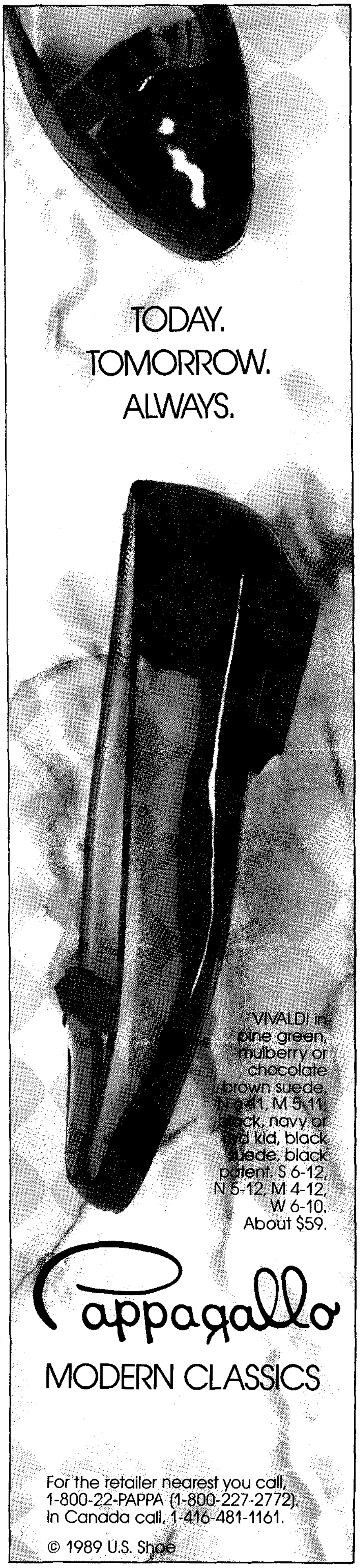
AT night, in the Times Square area, you can watch people exercising a skill that for decades many critics have been complaining disappeared with the invention of photography: the ability to draw realistically. At various spots around town, we've been noticing a new generation of such portrait artists, and we've observed that their subjects react to being drawn in a different way from models in the past. People are so used to photography that even when there's no camera they behave as if they're in front of one.

On a recent evening, at 44th Street and Broadway, there were at least twenty sidewalk artists sitting on garden chairs and doing realistic portraits of customers—people who had been walking down the street, stopped, and handed over fifteen dollars. Among those posing was a woman who clearly believed she was having her photograph taken. She was completely frozen and her mouth was stretched as far as it would go in a huge smile, even though the artist was working on the flip of her bangs. A man walked by and smiled back at her. She didn't move a muscle. The man realized the smile wasn't for him and kept on walking. She went on smiling, although by now the artist had only gotten as far as her forehead. In fact, she held the smile rigid through the entire sitting—and in the finished portrait she looks like someone who had said "Cheese" for twenty minutes.

Sidney D. Gamble (1890-1968)—A small selection of photographs from the thousands that the artist shot in China between 1917 and 1932. This exhibition shows an observer who was interested in capturing both tradition and change. Through Sept. 9. (China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.)

Walter Rosenblum—An exhibition of works drawn from such documentary series as the Pitt Street Project, in the late thirties, and a 1958 journey through Haiti. Starts Sept. 13. (Photofind, 138 Spring St.)

Aaron Siskind—No one can defend the importance of form in photography better than John Szarkowski, and few photographers can illustrate his words as well as Aaron Siskind. Szarkowski's selection of Siskind's prints from those owned by the Museum of Modern Art is a treat. Even though many of the photographs could mingle among a very refined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PHOTOGRAPHY–Cont'd

gathering of abstract paintings, they never let you forget where they came from—a camera that framed what was already there. Through Oct. 10. (Museum of Modern Art.)

Brooklyn Museum—Two exhibitions. One is composed of nineteenth-century photographs of New York by George Brainerd and Breading Way. Brainerd invented cameras and used them to record daily life in and around New York. Industrialization is a theme of Brainerd's photographs, and is also a visible force behind Way's images, which show not just a new technology but the new concept of leisure that came with it. The other exhibition is a selection of seventy-two photographs that the museum has purchased over the past four years. Both shows through Sept. 18. (Eastern Parkway. Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

International Center of Photography—"Portraits of Black Women Who Changed America," a show of works by photojournalist Brian Lanker. . . . ¶ Dorit Cypis will have an installation, called "The Naked Nude," in which viewers will be surrounded by seven slide projectors. Both shows start Sept. 8. (1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

"Reclaiming Paradise"—A hundred landscape photographs by twenty-six American women, including Imogen Cunningham, Betty Hahn, and Dorothea Lange. The images range from Anne Brigman's 1909 photogravure "The Bubble" to Linda Conner's 1986 gold-toned silver-gelatine "Rift, HI." Through Oct. 21. (Lehman College Gallery, Bedford Park Boulevard West at Goulden Ave., the Bronx.)

"Sickles Photo-Reporting Service"—A selection of forty-five images of the forties and fifties (three hassocks on a shag rug, say, or a milk-bottle production line), from the vast archives of this bastion of mainstream, commercial photography. Through Sept. 16. (Janet Borden, 560 Broadway.)

"Tutavoh: Learning the Hopi Way"—This show, exploring the various aspects of raising children in the Hopi community, is composed of two groups of photographs: more than half are early-twentieth-century prints of several Hopi villages in northern Arizona; the remaining works were taken in the late seventies by Susanne Page. (Museum of the American Indian, Broadway at 155th St.)

"The Nature of New York City"—An array of photo opportunities that should have been missed. A number of the pictures feature weeds that are supposed to be touching but that need to be pulled. Through Sept. 30. (American Museum of Natural History.)

"Invention and Continuity in Contemporary Photographs"—The title promises more than what you actually get with this show. What's on display is a small selection of work, some of it strong and some as unsubtle as the curatorial method that has systematized the images into three obvious categories. Through Oct. 8. (Metropolitan Museum.)

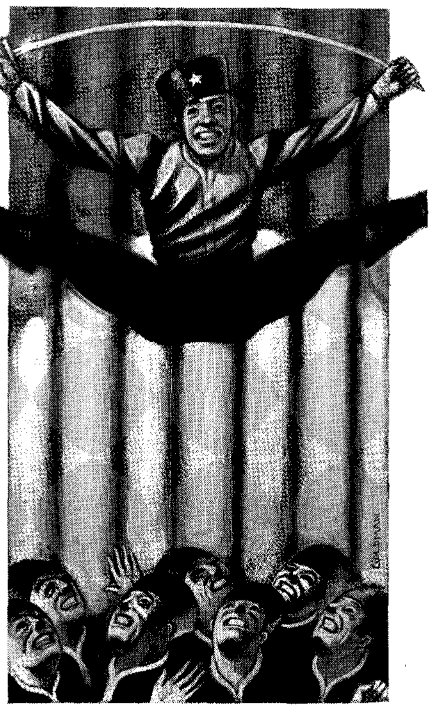
New Shows—STEPHEN BRIGIDI, Witkin, 415 West Broadway (starts Sept. 12); JASCHI KLEIN, Pfeifer, 568 Broadway (starts Sept. 9); ADAM LICHT, ABC No Rio, 156 Rivington St. (open Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2 to 6, through Sept. 21); DUANE MICHALS, Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, starts Sept. 7); WARREN NEIDICH, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. (opens at noon, through Sept. 22); MITCHELL SYROP, Lieberman & Saul, 155 Spring St. (starts Sept. 9); JEFF WALL, Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, starts Sept. 13).

MUSIC

JULIANA GONDEK cannot have known just how keenly Poland would be on everybody's mind when she set the dates for her two recitals of Polish song at Merkin Hall (September 13 and 24), but her programs would have aroused our attention anyway. Ms. Gondek is an interesting singer, and what little we know of Polish Romantic music beyond Chopin is beguiling enough to invite further acquaintance. Modern Polish music we know much better: Lutoslawski and Penderecki are familiar names, and Andrzej Panufnik is becoming one.

Chopin himself wrote a few songs, which are tuneful, if rather undeveloped, compared with his piano music. Stanislaw Moniuszko, who founded a school of Polish nationalist opera with his "Halka" in 1858, wrote many songs, and he had a gift for melody. Karol Szymanowski's gift was for impressionistic atmosphere. We aren't familiar with Ignacy Jan Paderewski's songs, but, if they are anything like the graceful and haunting piano pieces that he recorded himself, we look forward to them. Józef Szulc we know of as the author of a beautiful *mélodie* recorded by Nellie Melba and Maggie Teyte.

Ms. Gondek's recitals include songs by all the composers named above, except Penderecki, and eleven more (among them Francis Poulenc, who was no part Polish but who wrote a song cycle on Polish texts). The pianist for both performances will be Peter Grunberg.



The Alexandrov Red Army Song and Dance Ensemble

New York City Opera—CANDIDE, with Lisa Saffer, Maris Clement, Brooks Almy, and Robert Tate; Scott Bergeson conducting. (Sept. 5, Sept. 7, and Sept. 10, all at 8; and Sept. 9 at 2.) . . . ¶ With Cyndia Sieden, Maris Clement, Muriel Costa-Greenspon, and Mark Beudert; Scott Bergeson. (Sept. 6 and Sept. 8-9, all at 8.) . . . IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA, with Wendy White, Susan Nicely, Thomas Woodman, and Paul Austin Kelly; Sergiu Comissiona. (Sept. 13 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

New York Festival of Song—Presenting Leonard Bernstein's "Arias and Barcarolles," with Judy Kaye, soprano; William Sharp, baritone; and Michael Barrett and Steven Blier, piano. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Sept. 7 at 8.)

Alexandrov Red Army Song and Dance Ensemble—A group of more than two hundred singers, dancers, and musicians from the Soviet Union. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907. Sept. 12 at 7:30 and Sept. 13 at 8. Through Sept. 17.)

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Neil Young—"I've got to just tear down whatever has happened to me and build something new," this protean troubadour once said, and in his various manifestations over the past quarter century he has produced some of the finest (and sometimes weirdest) rock and folk music of our time. On this tour, he's spending most of his concert alone onstage with an accoustic guitar, a harmonica, and that piercing, haunting voice, singing old songs like "Heart of Gold" and "Powderfinger," and powerful new ones like "El Dorado" and one with a chorus that goes "Keep on rocking in the free world." It's a performance that puts a lot of bands with skyscraper sound systems to shame, and it's passionately up-to-date. The opening act is the fervent, red-hot singer Maria McKee, accompanied by the lone holdover from her old "cow-punk" band Lone Justice, pianist Bruce Brody. (Palladium, 126 E. 14th St. 473-7171. Sept. 5-6 at 8.)

Jerry Garcia Band—If you take the time to blink after the recent round of Grateful Dead concerts in the area, you may miss this appearance by the Dead's burly lead guitarist, with a funky backup unit that's more uptown than outer space. The gospel-music producer Melvin Seals plays keyboards, two lovely ladies named Gloria Jones and Jackie LaBranch stand in for the choir, and the songs range from covers of Dylan, Van Morrison, and Los Lobos to Garcia originals. The Dead's rhythm guitarist, Bob Weir, will open the show, accompanied by the tasteful and lyrical bassist Rob Wasserman. (Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 587-9222. Sept. 6 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Sept. 7 at 7:30.)

Stevie Nicks—Hide the diaphanous scarves, batten down the candle holders, stash the patchouli oil—the otherworldly gypsy of Southern California pop is coming to town with songs of hearts as frayed as her vintage dresses, and the persona of a wounded princess lost in a mystic haze. The promise of Nicks' shows is always that at some point she may yank the gauzy drapes off the lamps and deliver some driving, churning rock music that has more transports than trances behind it. (Jones Beach Theatre. Sept. 9 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-516 221-1000.)

Fine Young Cannibals and Neneh Cherry—As far as influences and origins go, this show is a collagist's dream. Guitarist Andy Cox and keyboard player David Steele of Fine Young Cannibals helped to perfect the wonderful ska-reggae-punk-and-Birmingham-soul sound of the English Beat before spinning off to form the core trio of the Cannibals with singer Roland Gift, whose husky, viscous voice is a one-man wall of sound. The group's recordings are studio candy—the tasty details and accents make for a global-pop whole that is greater than the sum of its parts—so their daunting task is satisfying a live audience that is one big sweet tooth. Neneh Cherry, the stunning Swedish-West African beauty and former P.S. 3 student (her stepfather is the American jazz trumpeter Don Cherry), will open the concert with her transatlantic blend of rap, hip-hop, rhythm and blues, and London funk. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Sept. 12-13 at 8.)

Freddie Jackson—While Jacksons from another clan (Michael's) have been diverting everyone's attention, this Jackson, a native son of upper Manhattan, has been quietly conquering the black-music charts (he has had eight number-one singles in three years) with a crooning R & B style that is the aural equivalent of silk sheets and champagne. His fans will be glad to let him know in person that he's earned his triumphal nights on Broadway. (Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. 575-9200. Sept. 12-13 at 8. Through Sept. 17.)

SPORTS

The start of football season used to depress us somewhat, because, though we love both the Jets and the Giants, full enjoyment of the sport for us entails attending major college games, and for that fix we used to have to venture miles afield. Last October, however, a friend asked us to attend a homecoming game being played by Columbia, his alma mater, against Princeton. At first, we were not enticed: like everyone who regularly peruses the Ivy-League-slanted football coverage in the *Times*, we knew about Columbia's forty-four-game losing streak—a Division I record—and we had no wish to witness the Lions sink to further depths up past Morningside Heights. But we'd wanted to see Baker Field's Lawrence A. Wien Stadium ever since it was renovated, in the mid-eighties, and this was the chance. As everyone knows, Columbia won the game, 16–13, causing all hell to break loose on campus. Over the past eleven months, however, we've thought less about the postgame storming of the goalposts than about the torrid performance during the contest—thirty-seven rushes for a hundred and eighty-two yards—by Greg Abbruzzese, a sophomore tailback from Swampscott, Massachusetts. And we plan to be back at Wien on September 16 at 1:30, when Abbruzzese returns to action (under the new head coach, Ray Tellier), against Harvard.

HOME TEAMS

Yankees—Vs. the California Angels, Sept. 4 at 1:05. The Yankee lineup is anyone's guess.

Mets—Vs. the Chicago Cubs, Sept. 4 at 7:05 and Sept. 5 at 7:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the St. Louis Cardinals, Sept. 6 at 7:35 and Sept. 7 at 1:35. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Pirates, Sept. 8 at 7:35, and Sept. 9-10 at 1:35.

Jets—Vs. the New England Patriots, in the season opener, Sept. 10 at 4.

(Home base for the Mets is Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; for the Yankees, Yankee Stadium, 293-6000; and for the Jets, Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands. For information about tickets, call 421-6600.)

RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. The Jerome Handicap takes place on Sept. 4 and the Maskette is on Sept. 9. . . . At the Meadowlands: Sept. 4 at 1:30; weeknights at 7:30 starting Sept. 5. . . . **Trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1.

CHAMPIONSHIPS—TENNIS

United States Open—U.S.T.A. National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadow. 1-718 271-5100. Sept. 4 at 11, Sept. 5-7 at 11 and 7:35, Sept. 8-9 at 11 and 7:35, and Sept. 10 at 1:00.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

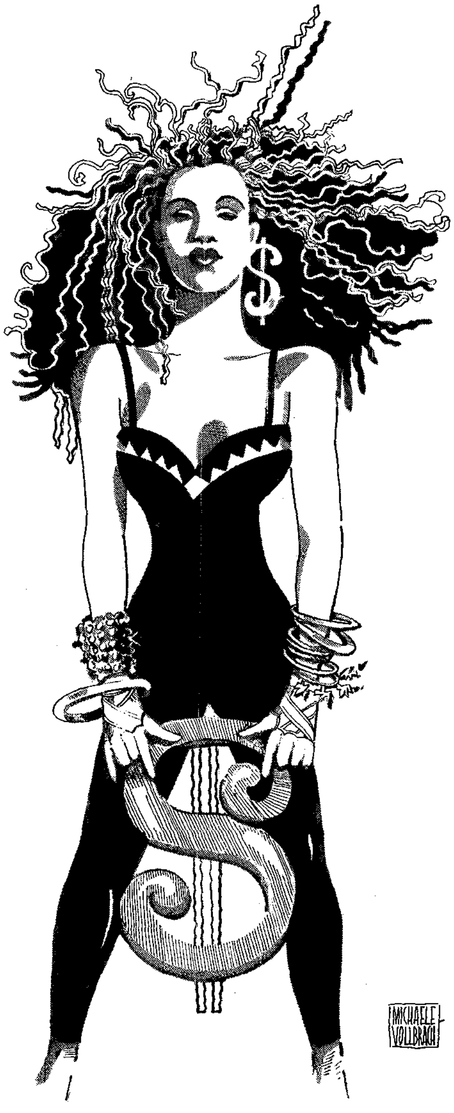
Autumn Crafts Festival—Glassblowing, horn tooting, pie eating, sheepshearing, clog dancing, and chicken grilling will accompany the display and sale of handcrafted items at Lincoln Center's Fordham University Plaza. The last days of this season's folksy extravaganza are Sept. 9-10, from 11 to 6.

Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibit—More than three hundred artists and artisans will compete for more than a hundred prizes in several categories (Art for Children, Watercolor, Ceramics, Leather, etc.) on the streets of Greenwich Village, in this annual outdoor show. The last days this year of the event are Sept. 9-10 from noon to sundown.

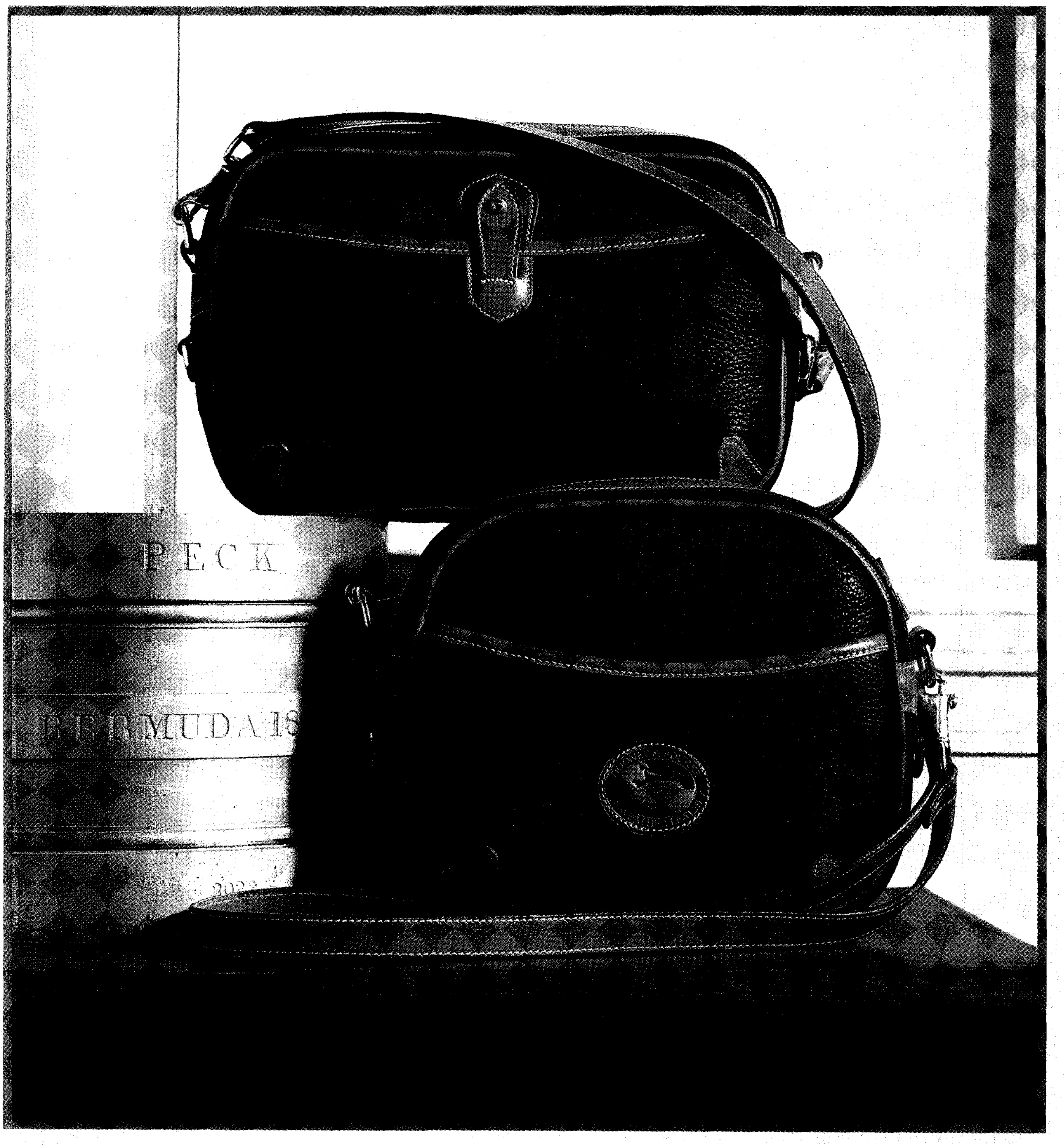
Frog Search—The Central Park rangers will lead a group, on Sept. 9, at 2, down to the Turtle Pond, near 79th St., to look for frogs and toads. With enough well-placed kisses, you may find a prince to inhabit Belvedere Castle (just a hop away), so bring your princess duds.

Walking Tours—Summer's just about over, so on Sept. 10 trade in your swimsuit for some thick-soled shoes, and explore the island. The 92nd Street Y sponsors two tours that day, one (starting at 11) to Chinatown, the other (starting at 1) to Harlem, where Marvin Gelfand will point out old Jewish homes, synagogues, and theatres. For information, call 415-5424. . . . ¶ The Tenement Museum also sponsors a tour the same day (starting at 1) which explores the African, German, Irish, Italian, Chinese, and Jewish communities of the Lower East Side. For information, call 431-0233.

Memoranda—New York City public schools will open on Sept. 11; the mayoral primaries will be held on Sept. 12. The hours for voting are 6 A.M. to 9 P.M.



. . . and Neneh Cherry at the Beacon



Photographer: Minh Nguyen

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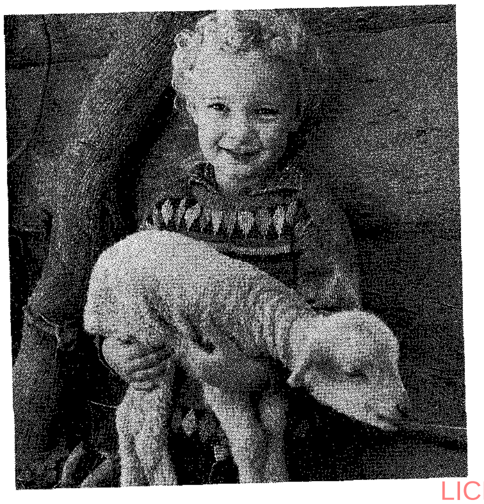

The Kelpie is a short-haired dog with pointed ears, with a gift for herding sheep, and a lively, almost fiendish interest in doing so.

All of which makes him, along with the motorbike, invaluable in helping his "jackeroo" (cowboy) Jim tend the gigantic flocks that tread the sheepwalks of Australia. Sheepwalks such as this 330,000-acre set of properties owned by F.S. Falkiner and Sons Proprietary, Ltd., which serves up its rich grasses to an average grazing population of 110,000 sheep.

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believe have a special "sparkle." (After all, if you go to Yorkshire for Yorkshire pudding, why would we go to the Orient for Shetland sweaters?)

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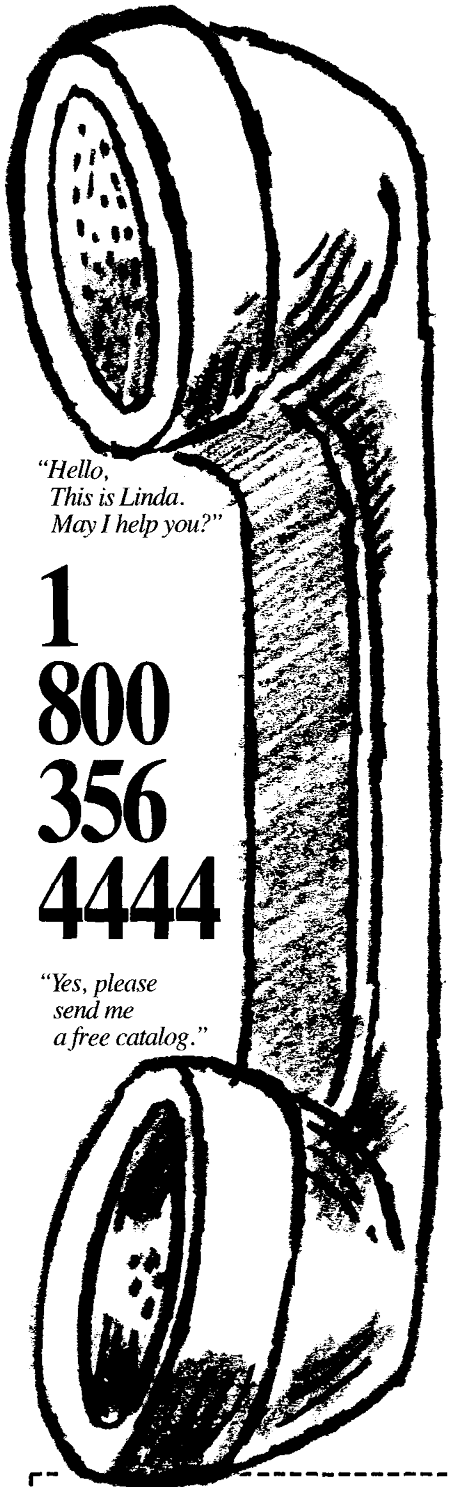

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 26.

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"La Boca del Lobo" (1988, directed by Francisco Lombardi; a Peruvian film, in Spanish). Closed Mondays.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Abyss" (†).
Theatre 3: "Cookie" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"The Wizard of Oz" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"The Abyss" (†).

Murray Hill, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
"Batman" (†).

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).
Theatre 2: "Shirley Valentine" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy, Tommy Lee Jones, and John Heard.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Parenthood" (†).

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Sept. 7: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†).
From Sept. 8: "Kickboxer," with Jean-Claude Van Damme.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"The Abyss" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan.
Theatre 2: "Millennium" (Michael Anderson), with Kris Kristofferson, Cheryl Ladd, Daniel J. Travanti, Robert Joy, Lloyd Bochner, and Brent Carver.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"Romero" (John Duigan), with Raul Julia.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Casualties of War" (†).
Theatre 2: "Parenthood" (†).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Cookie" (†).
Theatre 2: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 5: "Distant Voices, Still Lives" (†). From Sept. 6: "Spices" (Ketan Mehta; in Hindi), with Smita Patil.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Lock Up" (John Flynn), with Sylvester Stallone, Donald Sutherland, John Amos, Darlanne Fluegel, and Sonny Landham.
Theatre 2: "Wired" (Larry Peerce), with Michael Chiklis, Ray Sharkey, J. T. Walsh, and Patti D'Arbanville.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy, Tommy Lee Jones, and John Heard.
Theatre 2: "Relentless" (William Lustig), with Judd Nelson, Robert Loggia, and Leo Rossi.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Dead Poets Society" (†).

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Shirley Valentine" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Parenthood" (†).

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "The Abyss" (†).
Theatre 2: "Relentless" (William Lustig), with Judd Nelson, Robert Loggia, and Leo Rossi.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Casualties of War" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (†).
Theatre 2: "Chocolat" (†).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).
Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 2: "Casualties of War" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Sept. 4: "The Package" (directed by Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy, Tommy Lee Jones, and John Heard. From Sept. 5: Theatre temporarily closed.
Theatre 2: Sept. 4: "Carnival of Souls" (†). From Sept. 5: Theatre temporarily closed.
Theatre 3: Sept. 4: "The Navigator: An Odyssey Across Time" (Vincent Ward), with Bruce Lyons. From Sept. 5: Theatre temporarily closed.
Theatre 4: Sept. 4: "Dead Poets Society" (†). From Sept. 5: Theatre temporarily closed.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Cookie" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Abyss" (†).
Theatre 4: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 5: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).
Theatre 6: "Casualties of War" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0600)
Theatre 1: "Do the Right Thing" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 7: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan. From Sept. 8: "Kickboxer," Jean-Claude Van Damme.
Theatre 3: "Millennium" (Michael Anderson), with Kris Kristofferson, Cheryl Ladd, Daniel J. Travanti, Robert Joy, Lloyd Bochner, and Brent Carver.

Worldwide Cinemas, 49th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).
Theatre 2: "Do the Right Thing" (†).
Theatre 3: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 4: "Casualties of War" (†).
Theatre 5: "Casualties of War" (†).
Theatre 6: "Uncle Buck" (John Hughes), with John Candy and Amy Madigan.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Dead Poets Society" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Abyss" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"The Wizard of Oz" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Cookie" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Romero" (John Duigan), with Raul Julia.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Weapons of the Spirit" (Pierre Sauvage), a documentary.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"A Chorus of Disapproval" (Michael Winner), with Anthony Hopkins and Jeremy Irons.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
(Matinées only) "The Adventures of Milo and Otis" (Masanori Hata); and (evenings only) "Do the Right Thing" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Shirley Valentine" (†).

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Little Thief" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Music Teacher" (Gérard Corbiau; in French).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).
Theatre 2: "sex, lies, and videotape" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"When Harry Met Sally . . ." (†).

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Dead Poets Society" (†).
Theatre 3: "Relentless" (William Lustig), with Judd Nelson, Robert Loggia, and Leo Rossi.
Theatre 4: "The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy, Tommy Lee Jones, and John Heard.
Theatre 5: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).
Theatre 6: "Cookie" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 7: "Millennium" (Michael Anderson), with Kris Kristofferson, Cheryl Ladd, Daniel J. Travanti, Robert Joy, Lloyd Bochner, and Brent Carver. From Sept. 8: "Kickboxer," Jean-Claude Van Damme.

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "The Abyss" (†).
Theatre 2: "Casualties of War" (†).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Batman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wired" (directed by Larry Peerce), with Michael Chiklis, Ray Sharkey, J. T. Walsh, and Patti D'Arbanville.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 7: "Cookie" (†). From Sept. 8: "Kickboxer," Jean-Claude Van Damme.
Theatre 4: "Millennium" (Michael Anderson), with Kris Kristofferson, Cheryl Ladd, Daniel J. Travanti, Robert Joy, Lloyd Bochner, and Brent Carver.
Theatre 5: "Friday the 13th, Part VIII: Jason Takes Manhattan" (Rob Hebben).
Theatre 6: "Lock Up" (John Flynn), with Sylvester Stallone, Donald Sutherland, John Amos, and Sonny Landham.

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
"The Package" (Andrew Davis), with Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy, Tommy Lee Jones, and John Heard.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" (†); and "Star Trek V: The Final Frontier" (William Shatner), with Shatner and Leonard Nimoy.
Theatre 3: "Turner & Hooch" (Roger Spottiswoode), with Tom Hanks; and "Honey, I Shrunk the Kids" (†).
Theatre 4: "Cheetah" (Jeff Blyth), with Keith Coogan.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Relentless" (William Lustig), with Judd Nelson, Robert Loggia, and Leo Rossi.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Parenthood" (†).
Theatre 2: "Casualties of War" (†).

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"A Nightmare on Elm Street 5: The Dream Child" (Stephen Hopkins), with Robert Englund.

West Side Cinema I and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).
Theatre 2: "Lethal Weapon 2" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Sept. 4: "Seven Chances" (1925, directed by Buster Keaton; silent), with Keaton; and "Sons of the Desert" (1933, William A. Seiter), with Laurel and Hardy.
Sept. 5-6: "Two Girls and a Sailor" (1944, Richard Thorpe), with Gloria De Haven, Van Johnson, and June Allyson; and "Best Foot Forward" (1943, Edward Buzzell), with Lucille Ball.
Sept. 7: "Man on the Flying Trapeze" (†); and "Goin' to Town" (1935, Alexander Hall), with Mae West, Paul Cavanagh, and Ivan Lebedeff.
Sept. 8-9: "The Gold Rush" (1925, Charlie Chaplin; silent), with Chaplin, Mack Swain, and Georgia Hale; and "The General" (1926, Buster Keaton and Clyde Bruckman; silent), with Keaton.
Sept. 10-11: "A Night at the Opera" (1935, Sam Wood), with the Marx Brothers, Margaret Dumont, Allan Jones, Kitty Carlisle,

and Sig Rumann; and "On the Avenue" (†).

Sept. 12-13: "Safety Last" (1923, Fred Newmeyer and Sam Taylor; silent), with Harold Lloyd and Mildred Davis; and "College" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)

Through Sept. 5: "The 400 Blows" (1959, François Truffaut; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud; and "Jules and Jim" (1962, Truffaut; in French), with Jeanne Moreau, Oskar Werner, and Henri Serre.

Sept. 6-7: "True Believer" (1989, Joseph Ruben), with James Woods, Robert Downey, Jr., Yuji Okumoto, Margaret Colin, and Kurtwood Smith; and "Taxi Driver" (1976, Martin Scorsese), with Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, Cybill Shepherd, and Jodie Foster.

Sept. 8-9: "Brazil" (1985, Terry Gilliam), with Jonathan Pryce, Kim Greist, Robert De Niro, Katherine Helmond, Michael Palin, and Ian Holm; and "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen" (1989, Gilliam), with John Neville, Eric Idle, Sarah Polley, Oliver Reed, Robin Williams, and Uma Thurman.

Sept. 10: "The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser" (†); and "Fitzcarraldo" (1982, Werner Herzog; in German), with Klaus Kinski and Claudia Cardinale.

Sept. 11-12: "Henry V" (1944, Laurence Olivier), with Olivier, Renee Asherson, Leslie Banks, George Robey, Esmond Knight, Leo Genn, Felix Aylmer, Niall MacGinnis, and Robert Newton; and "Othello" (†).

From Sept. 13: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961, Blake Edwards), with Audrey Hepburn, George Peppard, Patricia Neal, Martin Balsam, and Mickey Rooney; and "Funny Face" (1957, Stanley Donen), with Hepburn, Fred Astaire, Kay Thompson, Michel Auclair, Suzy Parker, Ruta Lee, and Robert Flemying.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)

Through Sept. 5: "Point Blank" (1967, John Boorman), with Lee Marvin, Angie Dickinson, Carroll O'Connor, and Keenan Wynn; "The Friends of Eddie Coyle" (1973, Peter Yates), with Robert Mitchum, Peter Boyle, and Richard Jordan; and "Thieves' Highway" (1949, Jules Dassin), with Richard Conte and Lee J. Cobb.

Sept. 6-7: "On the Waterfront" (1954, Elia Kazan), with Marlon Brando, Lee J. Cobb, Eva Marie Saint, Karl Malden, and Rod Steiger; and "The Wild One" (1954, Laslo Benedek), with Brando, Mary Murphy, and Lee Marvin.

Sept. 8-9: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo; and "Alphaville" (1965, Godard; in French), with Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina, and Akim Tamiroff.

Sept. 10: "Paths of Glory" (†); and "Westfront 1918" (1930, G. W. Pabst; in German).

Sept. 11-12: "Odds Against Tomorrow" (1959, Robert Wise), with Robert Ryan, Harry Belafonte, and Ed Begley; "The Street with No Name" (1948, William Keighley), with Richard Widmark and Mark Stevens; and "Crime Wave" (1953, André de Toth), with Sterling Hayden, Gene Nelson, and Phyllis Kirk.

From Sept. 13: "The Last Detail" (1974, Hal Ashby), with Jack Nicholson, Otis Young, and Randy Quaid; and "The King of Marvin Gardens" (1972, Bob Rafelson), with Nicholson, Bruce Dern, and Ellen Burstyn.

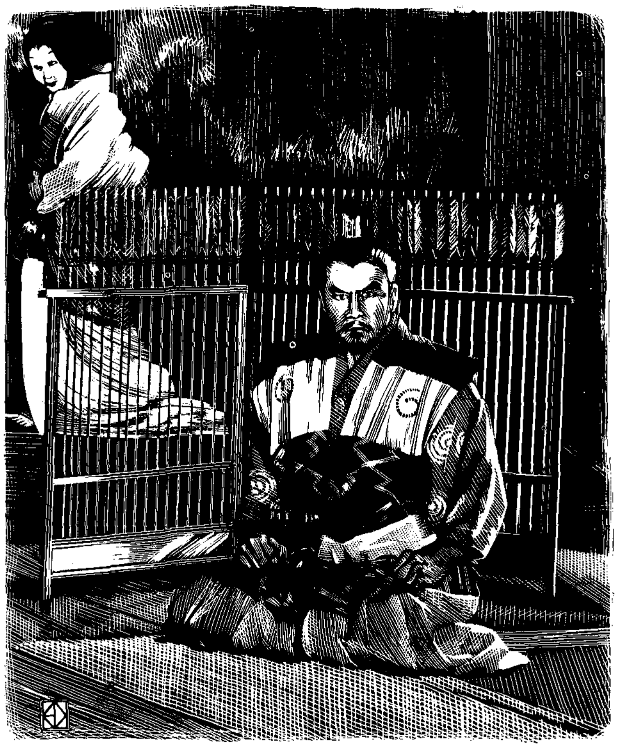
Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)

Sept. 4: "Young and Innocent" ("The Girl Was Young"; 1937, Alfred Hitchcock), with Derrick de Marney, Nova Pilbeam, Basil Radford, Percy Marmont, and Mary Clare; and "Murder" (1930, Hitchcock), with Herbert Marshall and Norah Baring.

Sept. 5: "Sawdust and Tinsel" ("The Naked Night"; 1953, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish), with Harriet Andersson and Ake Groenberg; and "Monika" (1952; Bergman; in Swedish), with Andersson, Lars Ekborg, and John Harryson.

Sept. 6: "Dangerous" (1936, Alfred E. Green), with Bette Davis, Franchot Tone, Margaret Lindsay, and Alison Skipworth; and "Dancing Lady" (1933, Robert Z. Leonard), with Fred Astaire, Joan Crawford, Franchot Tone, Clark Gable, Nelson Eddy, and Mary Robson.

Sept. 7: "Veronika Voss" (1982, Rainer Werner Fassbinder; in German), with Rosel Zech; and "Lili Marleen" (1981, Fassbinder; in German), with Hanna Schygulla and Giancarlo Giannini.



Toshiro Mifune in "Throne of Blood"

Sept. 8-9: "Last Tango in Paris" (1972, Bernardo Bertolucci; in French and English), with Marlon Brando and Maria Schneider; and "The Men" (1950, Fred Zinnemann), with Brando, Teresa Wright, Jack Webb, and Everett Sloane.

Sept. 10: "Funny Face" (1957, Stanley Donen), with Audrey Hepburn, Fred Astaire, Kay Thompson, Michel Auclair, Suzy Parker, Ruta Lee, and Robert Flemying; and "Sabrina" (1954, Billy Wilder), with Humphrey Bogart, Hepburn, William Holden, and John Williams.

Sept. 11: "Throne of Blood" (†); and "The Lower Depths" (1957, Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune.

Sept. 12: "Romance" (1930, Clarence Brown), with Greta Garbo, Gavin Gordon, Lewis Stone, and Elliott Nugent; and "Inspiration" (1931, Brown), with Garbo and Robert Montgomery.

Sept. 13: "Caesar and Cleopatra" (1946, Gabriel Pascal), with Vivien Leigh, Claude Rains, Flora Robson, and Stewart Granger; and "Pygmalion" (1938, Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard), with Howard and Wendy Hiller.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)

THEATRE 1: Hollywood films made in 1939. Sept. 4 at 2:30: "Juarez" (directed by William Dieterle), with Paul Muni, Bette Davis, and Brian Aherne. . . . ¶ Sept. 4 at 6: "One Third of a Nation" (Dudley Murphy), with Sylvia Sidney, Leif Erickson, and Sidney Lumet. . . . ¶ Sept. 5 at 2:30: "Rose of Washington Square" (Gregory Ratoff), with Tyrone Power, Alice Faye, and Al Jolson. . . . ¶ Sept. 5 at 6: "Golden Boy" (Rouben Mamoulian), with Barbara Stanwyck, William Holden, and Adolphe Menjou. . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 2:30: "One Third of a Nation." . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 5:30: "Gone with the Wind" (Victor Fleming), with Clark Gable, Vivien Leigh, and Leslie Howard. . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 2:30: "Golden Boy." . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 6 and Sept. 9 at 2: "The Wizard of Oz" (Fleming), with Judy Garland, Ray Bolger, Bert Lahr, and Jack Haley. . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 5: "Young Mr. Lincoln" (John Ford), with Henry Fonda and Alice Brady. . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at noon: "Gone with the Wind." . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at 5: "Rose of Washington Square." . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 2:30: "Young Mr. Lincoln." . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 6 and Sept. 12 at 2:30: "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" (Anatole Litvak), with Edward G. Robinson, Francis Lederer, and George Sanders. . . . ¶ Sept. 12 at 6: "Dodge City" (Michael Curtiz), with Errol Flynn, Olivia De Havilland, and Ann Sheridan.

THEATRE 2: Films by Taiwanese filmmakers Hou Hsiao-hsien and Edward Yang, all in Mandarin or Hokkien and Mandarin, with Chinese and English subtitles. Sept. 8 at 3: "Green, Green Grass of Home" (1982, Hou). . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 6: "That Day on the Beach" (1983, Yang). . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 2:30: "The Boys from Fengkuei" (1984, Hou). . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 5:30: "Taipei Story" (1984, Yang). . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at 2:30: "A Summer at Grandpa's" (1984, Hou). . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at 5:30: "The Terrorizer" (1986, Yang). . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 3: "Daughter of the Nile" (1987, Hou). . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 6: "Green, Green Grass of Home." . . . ¶ Sept. 12 at 2: "That Day on the Beach." . . . ¶ Sept. 12 at 6: "The Boys from Fengkuei."

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"MB Playhouse," a chance to see the television dramas you may have missed in the past thirty years. Sept. 5-9: Wendy Wasserstein's "Uncommon Women and Others" (1978, PBS), with Swoosie Kurtz, Meryl Streep, Ann McDonough, and Jill Eikenberry. . . . From Sept. 12: Ernest J. Gaines' "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" (1974, CBS), with Cicely Tyson. Showings Tuesdays at 3 and 6 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 3. . . . ¶ Comedies seen on cable. Sept. 5-9: "Alas Smith and Jones" (1986, BBC), with Mel Smith and Griff Rhys Jones; and "Yes, Prime Minister" (1986, BBC), with Nigel Hawthorne. . . . From Sept. 12: "Comic Relief" (1986), hosted by Robin Williams, Whoopi Goldberg, and Billy Crystal. Showings Tuesdays at 12:15 and 5:30 and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 12:15. . . . ¶ Shows produced and directed by Gary Smith and Dwight Hemion. Sept. 5-9: "Color Me Barbra" (1966, CBS) and "Barbra Streisand: One Voice" (1986, HBO). . . . From Sept. 12: "Uptown—A Musical-Comedy History of Harlem's Apollo Theatre" (1980, NBC), with Natalie Cole, Lou Rawls, Ben Vereen, and Flip Wilson. Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 1.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 36th St. at 35th Ave., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Sept. 6 at 2:30: "The Star" (1952, Stuart Heisler), with Bette Davis, Natalie Wood, and Sterling Hayden. . . . ¶ Sept. 7 at 2:30: "Hollywood Boulevard" (1936, Robert Florey), with John Halliday. . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 2:30: "The Day of the Locust" (1975, John Schlesinger), with Donald Sutherland, Karen Black, and Burgess Meredith. . . . ¶ Sept. 9-10 at 2 and 4:30: Four different programs of avant-garde films by independent filmmakers, presented by the Parabola Arts Foundation.

Asia Society, Park Ave. at 70th St. (517-2742)—Films starring the late Indian actress Smita Patil. Sept. 8 at 3: "The Vicious Circle" (1980, Ravindra Dharmaraj; in Hindi). . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 7: "The Role" (1977, Shyam Benegal; in Hindi). . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at noon: "In Search of Famine" (1980, Mrinal Sen; in Bengali). . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 4: "A Folk Tale" (1980, Ketan Mehta; in Gujarati). . . . ¶ Sept. 13 at 3: "In Search of Famine." . . . ¶ Sept. 13 at 7: "The Threshold" (1982, Jabbar Patel; in Marathi).

Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., State Office Building, Art Gallery, 163 W. 125th St. (873-5040)—On Sept. 10, starting at 1, three films by Spike Lee will be shown. "Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (1983), with Monty Ross; "She's Gotta Have It" (1986), with Tracy Camilia John, Tommy Redmond Hicks, and Lee; and "School Daze" (1987), with Larry Fishburne, Giancarlo Esposito, Joe Seneca, and Lee.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Penelope Gilliatt.)

The Abyss—This undersea epic is more complex technically than the previous films written and directed by James Cameron—"The Terminator" and "Aliens"—and, disastrously, it aims for emotional complexity as well. The main characters are an estranged married couple (Ed Harris and Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio) who are forced to work together in an emergency salvage operation—searching the depths for a nuclear submarine that met with a mysterious accident. Cameron wants to turn this routine plot into a metaphor for the couple's attempt to salvage their relationship. Although that isn't a very subtle idea, he might have managed to put it over if he had concentrated on the action and let the meanings take care of themselves. But the action sequences are confusingly edited, the dialogue is painfully explicit, and the B-movie suspense devices he uses (such as placing a raging psycho aboard the salvage vessel) tend to violate the integrity of the metaphor. The big message is: You have to touch bottom—way, way down there—before you can see the light. The light at the movie's climax, unfortunately, takes the form of benign, pastel-colored aliens (provided by the Dream Quest Images effects factory). Throughout, Cameron seems utterly lost: he's trying to reach down farther into himself, and everything he clutches at runs through his fingers. Michael Biehn plays the villain. Cinematography by Mikael Salomon.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/4/89.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Bay Cinema, Gotham Cinema, Loews Orpheum, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Olympia.)

Batman—Tim Burton's powerfully glamorous comic-book epic, with sets angled and lighted like film noir, goes beyond pulp. It has a funky, nihilistic charge, and an eerie, poetic intensity. Michael Keaton is the fabulously wealthy Bruce Wayne, who patrols the sinister nighttime canyons of Gotham City in the guise of Batman, and Jack Nicholson is the sniggering mobster Jack Napier, who turns into the leering madman the Joker. The two are fighting for the soul of the city that spawned them. The movie is underwritten, but it has so many unpredictable spins that what's missing doesn't seem to matter much. It's mean and anarchic and blissful. Written by Sam Hamm, Warren Skaaren (and uncredited others), based on characters created by Bob Kane. With cinematography by Roger Pratt; design by Anton Furst; costumes by Bob Ringwood; a plangent score by Danny Elfman; and songs by Prince. The cast includes Jack Palance, Kim Basinger, Jerry Hall, and Robert Wuhl.—P.K. (7/10/89) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill, Cinema II, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Carnival of Souls (1962)—This bleak, unnerving horror picture was made, in black and white, for about thirty thousand dollars, by a bunch of industrial filmmakers in Lawrence, Kansas. It's the story of a young woman named Mary Henry (Candace Hilligoss) who, after apparently surviving a car accident, becomes aware that she has become sort of *different*—not fully engaged in life, let's say. She seems to flicker in and out of existence, and she's more alone than any horror-movie heroine you've ever seen. Mary Henry is a kind of existential transient: her life fades in and out, as if she were watching it on an old TV with unpredictable reception. The director, Herk Harvey (who has never made another feature), achieves some terrifying and original scenes; even the movie's cheapness is expressive. The performances are variable, the settings are stark, the sound recording is erratic, and somehow it all works. Harvey pulls us through the movie by alternating scenes of everyday life with visions of death, and daring us to locate ourselves; in the flat, neither-here-nor-there landscape of "Carnival of Souls," we're never entirely sure where we are. Also with Sidney Berger, Frances Feist, and the director (who plays a menacing ghoul). John Clifford wrote the script. The beautiful 35-mm. cinematography is by Maurice Prather.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Quad Cinema; Sept. 4.)

Casualties of War—A great, intense movie about war and rape, based on a Vietnam incident of 1966 that was reported in this magazine (October 18, 1969) by the late Daniel Lang. He gave an emotionally devastating account of the actions of a squad of five American soldiers who kidnapped a Vietnamese village girl, raped her, and then covered up their crime by killing her. One of the five men refused to take part in the rape, and, despite threats and attempts on his life, forced the Army to bring the other four to trial. He's the one who suffers from guilt: he can't forgive himself for his inability to save the girl's life. Directed by Brian De Palma, the movie has the purity of films such as "Grand Illusion" and "Shoeshine"; it's the culmination of his best work. Sean Penn gives a daring performance as the squad's twenty-year-old leader; Michael J. Fox is impressive as the soldier who can't keep quiet; Thuy Thu Le is the dazed, battered girl who haunts the movie long before she's dead. The adaptation (too explicit in a few places) is by David Rabe; the cinematography is by Stephen H. Burum; the music is by Ennio Morricone. —P.K. (8/21/89) (Baronet, 86th Street East Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Olympia, and National Twin.)

Chocolat—Whatever Claire Denis's first feature is supposed to be about, it proves, at least, that the English don't have a monopoly on swanky colonial torpor. The movie is constructed as an extended flashback: a young Frenchwoman (named France) travelling in Africa remembers her fifties girlhood in a remote outpost of Cameroon, where her father was a district officer. Most of this story consists of smoldering looks exchanged by the girl's beautiful mother (Giulia Boschi) and the family's handsome African "boy," Protée (Isaach de Bankolé). When Maman feels herself becoming too hot and bothered at the sight of the noble black man, she brusquely orders him to fetch something; Protée deals with his frustration by taking a lot of showers. Nothing actually happens. In denying him any kind of release for his pent-up desire, Denis encourages us to think she's making a political point. What she's really doing is dehumanizing him—treating him as a gleaming hunk whose anger and wounded reserve just make him more exotically alluring. "Chocolat" looks pretty good, but it's merde in a fancy wrapper. In French.—T.R. (Bleecker Street Cinema.)

College (1927)—A beautiful little comedy. Buster Keaton is a bookworm, working his way through college and determined to become a star athlete. The story line isn't as miraculously fresh as in a couple of his films, but it allows for some of his most startlingly inventive stunts. Despite the many pilferings from this film (it has been a gold mine for other comedians), the routines are executed so precisely and with such an air of confident innocence that they are charged with surprise—and probably will be forever.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 12-13.)

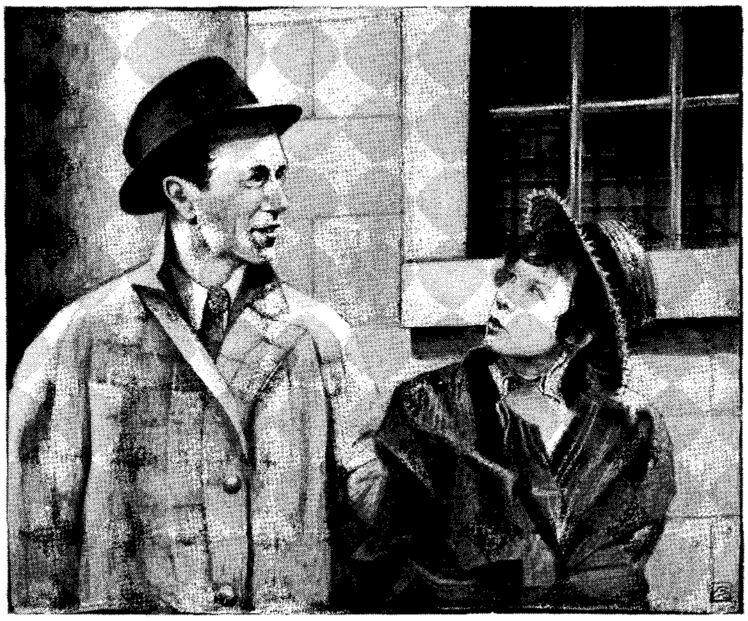
Cookie—This gangster comedy, directed by Susan Seidelman, is about as disposable as a movie can be. The humor has no edge, despite the violent profession of most of the characters. Emily Lloyd, the British teen-ager who gave such a smashing performance in "Wish You Were Here," plays Cookie, the illegitimate daughter of a mobster (Peter Falk) about to be released from prison. Once he's out, they get to know each other, work together against his enemies, and so on. Lloyd, using a Brooklyn accent, is game and appealing but not very interesting here; directed to act "kooky," she's reduced to rolling her eyes and chewing her gum extra vigorously. Falk is more at home: he has effortless dignity and great timing. The most entertaining thing about this movie is listening to the supporting cast rasp away at their silly dialogue (by Alice Arlen and Nora Ephron). With Michael V. Gazzo, Brenda Vaccaro, and Lionel Stander around, this is the hoarsest cast in memory. Also featuring Dianne Wiest, Jerry Lewis, and Adrian Pasdar.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Cinema I, Chelsea Cinemas, 57th St. Playhouse, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through Sept. 7.)

Dead Poets Society—Robin Williams gives an astonishingly empathic performance as an eager, dedicated prep-school teacher in the late fifties. This teacher talks to his boys about the passions expressed in poetry and helps them release their creative impulses. But one of the boys, soaring on his new confidence, lacks the shrewdness and courage to deal with his rigid, uncomprehending father, and makes a disastrous choice. Directed by Peter Weir, from a script by Thomas Schulman, the picture draws out the obvious and turns itself into a classic. Weir, it appears, is more interested in the elegiac than in the dramatic. Like his "Gallipoli," this film has a gold ribbon attached to it. With Robert Sean Leonard, Ethan Hawke, Josh Charles, Gale Hansen, and Kurtwood Smith and Norman Lloyd.—P.K. (6/26/89) (68th St. Playhouse, Guild, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; Sept. 4.)

Distant Voices, Still Lives—Terence Davies' film, which has won awards at several international festivals, is airless, lugubrious, and overcomposed. It's an autobiographical movie, set in Liverpool in the forties and early fifties, and showing scenes from the life of a working-class family. In essence, it's kitchen-sink drama: Dad's a brute, Mom's a stoic sufferer, the kids rebel in pathetic, stunted ways—everybody's trapped, dead in the water. What's original—and creepy—about Davies' treatment of this familiar material is his relentless aestheticizing of it. He jumbles the chronology, uses a ton of old popular songs (à la Dennis Potter), and even messes with the color process: the colors are deliberately desaturated, so the images all have a dull-brown tone. Davies uses all the art-film techniques at his command to kill his family, embalm them, and rearrange their bodies in a series of lifeless, pristine tableaux. He combines the skills of an artist with the sensibility of a taxidermist. With Freda Dowie, Pete Postlethwaite, Angela Walsh, Lorraine Ashbourne, and Dean Williams.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Cinema 3rd Avenue; through Sept. 5.)

Do the Right Thing—The third feature by Spike Lee takes place in the black neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, on a punishingly hot day; the focus of the action is a pizzeria, Sal's Famous, which is apparently the last white-owned business on the block; and the climax is a riot sparked by a monstrous act of police brutality. At its most basic, Lee's intention is to demonstrate how in a racially polarized society the slow accumulation of small irritations can swell to something huge and ugly and lethal. It's a solid idea for a movie, and initially the picture provides its share of incidental pleasures. And, although most of the many characters Lee shows us are types, at least there are a lot of different ones, and their encounters are often funny. But Lee goes wrong by pushing his material to a "powerful" climax, a Scorsese-like explosion of violence: he sacrifices political clarity for the sake of the big statement. He's nimble-witted and passionate, but his movie seems to shout at us rather than speak to us. In addition to writing, producing, and directing, Lee plays the pivotal role of Mookie, the pizza deliveryman. Others in the cast are Danny Aiello (as Sal), Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Giancarlo Esposito, Bill Nunn, Rosie Perez, Joie Lee, John Turturro, and Richard Edson; as a trio of middle-aged street-corner philosophers, Paul Benjamin, Frankie Faison, and Robin Harris are responsible for the movie's best, loosest scenes.—T.R. (7/24/89) (23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Cinema 3. Evenings only.)

Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle—Eric Rohmer's latest picture doesn't belong to his "Comedies and Proverbs" cycle, and it isn't the beginning of a new series, either. It's not much of anything, actually—just a quartet of sketches about a country girl (Joëlle Miquel) and a city girl (Jessica Forde). Most of it was shot, in 16 mm., while Rohmer and his crew were waiting to film the "green ray" effect for his 1987 "Summer"; this movie was conceived as a diversion, an agreeable time killer, and it's very, very slight. The first



Leslie Howard and Wendy Hiller in "Pygmalion"

Gabriel Pascal's 1938 production of George Bernard Shaw's "Pygmalion" (directed by Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard, with Howard as Henry Higgins and Wendy Hiller as Eliza Doolittle) came out eighteen years before Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe turned the show into "My Fair Lady." But don't be surprised if this non-musical comedy (playing September 13 at Theatre 80 St. Marks) makes you feel like breaking into song. The filmmakers infused the cascading words with springy rhythms and harmonies; the editor was David Lean, who, according to an onlooker, cut this talky film as if it were a silent.

Leslie Howard is slender, light-timbred, and charismatic—a Shavian Fred Astaire. He turns Higgins' intelligence into an invigorating spectacle of alertness and wit, coiled poses and barbed attitudes. Wendy Hiller starts out far more "deliciously low" than either Julie Andrews or Audrey Hepburn, before growing into a regal womanliness. The movie adds emotional coloring to the play without softening it à la Lerner and Loewe. Never undercutting Shaw's cleverness, the film's a popular entertainment filled with vibrant visual flourishes: Eliza's first bath is a primal piece of slapstick, and Higgins' brutal phonetics lessons become mad-scientist parodies. Shaw was pleased with the result—he even permitted the film to end with the tentative suggestion that Higgins and Doolittle might live happily ever after.

episode, "The Blue Hour," which takes place in the country, is the most satisfying: an elegant little essay on natural sounds and the value of silence. The remaining three—set in Paris, where Reinette and Mirabelle share an apartment—are no more than anecdotes: casual, graceful, and utterly trivial. Also with Fabrice Luchini, Philippe Laudenbach, Marie Riviere, and Béatrice Romand. In French. —T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Honey, I Shrunk the Kids—A contraption invented by a suburban nerd scientist (Rick Moranis) cuts both his kids and the neighbors' down to size: a quarter of an inch. Unaware of what has happened, and unable to hear their pipsqueak cries, Dad sweeps them into a dustpan, dumps them in a garbage bag, and hauls the bag out to the curb. The kids have to make their way back to the house across the (not very recently mowed) lawn—a long trek for tiny, tiny legs. There are adventures, of course, engineered by the sort of special effects "magic" that probably even the youngest audiences have learned by now to dread. The real surprise of this movie —which was directed by Joe Johnston, an effects specialist from Industrial Light & Magic, and which carries an immense list of technical credits (including a "Scorpion Crew," a "Bee Sequence Crew," and a "Stop Motion Ant Crew")—is that it's friendly, good-humored, and unpretentious. Johnston manages to scale down not only the kids but also the movie's sense of its own importance. Also with Matt Frewer, Marcia Strassman, and Kristine Sutherland; Jared Rushton, Amy O'Neill, Thomas Brown, and Robert Oliveri are the kids. The imaginative cinematography is by Hiro Narita—T.R. (Embassy.)

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade—This mediocre third film in the Indiana Jones trilogy—a reprise of the first, "Raiders of the Lost Ark"—is a mixture of cliffhanger and anti-Nazi thriller and religious spectacle. It's enjoyable, but familiar, and the action lacks the exhilarating, leaping precision that the director, Steven Spielberg, is famous for. The only real spin is in the slapstick teamwork of Harrison Ford, as the archeologist-adventurer Indy, and Sean Connery, as Indy's father, a medievalist who's too engrossed in his studies to pay much attention to his daredevil son's triumphs. With River Phoenix playing Indy as a boy, Alison Doody, Denholm Elliott, John Rhys-Davies, and Julian Glover. The screenplay, by Jeffrey Boam, is based on a story devised by the producer George Lucas and Menno Meyjes.—P.K. (6/12/89) (Embassy. . . . ¶ Eastside Cinema; through Sept. 7.)

Lethal Weapon 2—Chases, explosions, fights, barrages of insults, the odd moment of manly sentimentality—these are the standard elements of American action movies in the eighties, and the "Lethal Weapon" movies use them with an amazing lack of shame. There's lots of comedy, but no real relief: the punch lines slam into our brains like cars into plate-glass windows. The only thing that makes this movie at all distinctive is its hero, a reckless L.A. cop named Riggs, a role that allows Mel Gibson to zip through the picture like a free electron. Riggs isn't actually trying to kill himself this time (as he was in the first movie), but he's still a wild man and Gibson is still having a great time playing him. It's a mischievous, sprightly performance: he treats the action sequences as if they were slapstick routines. (Unfortunately, the director, Richard Donner, doesn't have as light a touch.) Danny Glover plays his partner, Murtaugh, an easygoing, conservative black family man; he's mostly called upon to react with horror to Riggs' dangerous antics, and the joke of their relationship gets a little tiresome. (The effect, sometimes, is of a white guy doing heroic stuff while his black pal shuffles along beside him. Glover, a good actor, deserves better.) Joe Pesci does small wonders with his supporting role as a ferrety, motor-mouthed money launderer, and Joss Ackland glowers like Alastair Sim as the head villain, a South African diplomat who smuggles drugs. Also with Patsy Kensit. Jeffrey Boam wrote the screenplay. The score is by Michael Kamen, Eric Clapton, and David Sanborn.—T.R. (Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, 8th St. Playhouse, Chelsea Cinemas, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and West Side Cinema.)

The Little Thief—Claude Miller's movie, set in the early fifties, is about a rebellious provincial teen-ager named Janine (Charlotte Gainsbourg). The screenplay (by Miller, his wife, Annie, and Luc Béraud) is based on an original story by François Truffaut and Claude de Givray; Truffaut himself reportedly planned to direct a film of the story. (According to Miller, Truffaut's initial conception of "The 400 Blows" included the character of Janine in addition to the boy, Antoine Doinel, played by Jean-Pierre Léaud.) This movie bears recognizable traces of the late New Wave director: it's gentle-natured and sympathetic to the young, and its structure is casual and anecdotal, like the Doinel movies. What it lacks is Truffaut's energy. Miller is a perfectly decent craftsman, and the movie is never unwatchable, but nothing drives it forward from one scene to the next, and Janine's lucklessness and her tough-kid spirit don't resonate as Antoine's do. For Truffaut, the story wasn't the most important thing; it's all that's left of him in "The Little Thief." Also with Didier Bezace, Simon de la Brosse, and Nathalie Cardone. In French.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Man on the Flying Trapeze (1935)—From their titles, it's hard to tell the W. C. Fields movies apart; as John Mosher observed, "Fields is Fields, a rose is a rose." For the record, in this one Fields is Ambrose Wolfinger, and he and his daughter (Mary Brian) are the defenseless victims of his new wife (Kathleen Howard) and her sponging relatives (the worst is Grady Sutton). Directed by Clyde Bruckman.—P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 7.)

The Mystery of Kaspar Hauser (1975; also known as "Every Man for Himself and God Against All")—The story of Kaspar Hauser, who appeared in a German town in the eighteen-twenties, is a factually based variant of the lost-or-abandoned-child, Mowgli-Tarzan myth; Kaspar wasn't raised among wolves, bears, or apes but, rather, in isolation. In this nightmare version, written and directed by Werner Herzog, Kaspar (Bruno S.) is a grunting lump of a man, chained in a dungeonlike cellar from infancy. Covered with sores and welts, unable to stand, he is fed by a black-caped man who beats him with a truncheon. One day, the man carries him to a town square and leaves him there. The townspeople train him in human habits and try to educate him, but as he begins to learn he balks at what he is taught, and becomes obstinate, trying to retain his new, mesmerized pleasure in nature. Before the issues are resolved, he is struck down by the caped figure, who returns, first to maim him, then to murder him. Herzog achieves a visionary, overcast style; his images look off balance, crooked, as if the cameraman were wincing. Herzog is a film poet, all right, but he's a didactic film poet, given to heavy, folk-art ironies; he says that society puts you through pain in order to deform you, and he makes it impossible for you to identify with anyone but Kaspar, who hasn't lost his innocent responses. The other people are alone, immobilized, unanimated; life is dormant in them. Though one could not fault this in a painter's vision, in a filmmaker's it is numbing. In Herzog's conception Kaspar is the only one who has still got his soul. This conception has a flower-child fashionableness, but Bruno S. (who was once believed to be a mental defective himself) is amazing. His Kaspar has sly, piggy eyes, yet he's so totally absorbed in experiencing nature, his head thrust out ecstatically, straining to grasp everything he was denied in his cave existence, that he becomes Promethean; the light dawning in that face makes him look like a peasant Beethoven. In German.—P.K. (Cinema Village; Sept. 10.)

On the Avenue (1937)—One of the best of the Twentieth Century Fox musicals of the thirties, despite its unevenness and lack of sophistication. If it had nothing else, it might still be worth seeing for Alice Faye singing the memorable "This Year's Kisses," and it has a lot more: Dick Powell in ebullient voice, the Ritz Brothers doing a parody number, and a first-rate Irving Berlin score that includes "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm," "Slumming on Park Avenue," and "You're Laughing at Me." The love interest involves ever-beautiful, ever-coy Madeleine Carroll, who gurgles when she means to talk, but the director, Roy Del Ruth, doesn't linger on her. He does, blessedly, linger on Harry Ritz, and when this great manic vaudevillian puts on drag and does an imitation of Alice Faye, or when he exercises his eyeballs, you can just barely gasp "Dada." Written by Gene Markey and William Conselman. —P.K. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 10-11.)

Othello (1965)—A filmed record of the National Theatre of Great Britain production starring Laurence Olivier; the techniques employed are pitifully inadequate. But there he is: the most physical Othello imaginable—deep voice, with a trace of foreign music in it; happy, thick, self-satisfied laugh; rolling buttocks. He's grand and barbaric and, yes, a little lewd. As a lord, this Othello is a bit vulgar—too ingratiating, a boaster, an arrogant man. Who can afford to miss this performance? With Frank Finlay as the pale, parched little Iago—a man consumed with sexual jealousy—and Maggie Smith as the quietly strong, willful Desdemona. Stuart Burge, who directed this filming, doesn't always protect the actors: they speak as if they were on a stage and they're sometimes seen very close (in stage makeup) when the camera should be at a discreet distance.—P.K. (Cinema Village; Sept. 11-12.)

Parenthood—The script, by Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, is ambitiously constructed, tracing the relationships of several boomer-age parents with their kids, their siblings, and their own parents. The advantage of this arrangement is that none of the characters are onscreen very long: we have time to get sick of only about half of them, and some—especially the nervous, eager dad played by Steve Martin—are fun to watch. The drawback is that the movie has no drive. The dull title captures the tone precisely: the whole thing has been conceived generically, abstractly, and by the end the director, Ron Howard, is rushing from scene to scene tidying up loose ends, to make sure that each little individual drama gets its point across and that they all add up to a correct answer to the essay question "What is parenthood?" The movie tries very hard, but its wisdom is on the forlorn side. Also with Mary Steenburgen, Rick Moranis, Dianne Wiest, Jason Robards, Harley Kozak, Martha Plimpton, Keanu Reeves, and Tom Hulce.—T.R. (8/7/89) (34th St. East, Coronet, U. A. East, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

Paths of Glory (1957)—Just after he made his racetrack robbery picture, "The Killing," Stanley Kubrick directed this version of Humphrey Cobb's novel, photographed in Germany. It is not so much an anti-war film as an attack on the military mind. Some of the press went all out for it, but it wasn't popular. The movie has a fascinating jittery quality, especially when Timothy Carey, who's like a precursor of the hipster druggies of the sixties, is on the screen, and the strong, liberal-intellectual pitch makes it genuinely controversial, though it was certainly easier to be anti-militaristic in a film set during the First World War than it would have been in a film (made in peacetime) set during the Second World War. The story is about the class structure within the French Army—the aristocratic generals in their spacious, sunlit châteaus and the proletarian soldiers in the dark trenches; trapped between them is Colonel Dax (Kirk Douglas), who commiserates with the men but is powerless—he carries out the orders of the high command. When the soldiers refuse to fight in a battle that is almost certain death, three of them are selected to be tried for cowardice; Dax has the task of defending them. The film's rhythm is startling—you can feel the director's temperament. And there's an element of relentlessness in the way he sets out to demonstrate the hopeless cruelty of the "system." (The film was banned in France for some years.) It's an angry film that seems meant to apply to all armies. Watching it is very frustrating: Kubrick, who wrote the script with Calder Willingham and Jim Thompson, doesn't leave you with anything. He must have felt this, because he tacks on a scene at a cabaret, with a German girl (Susanne Christian) singing and the soldiers singing along, as they weep. (It just makes you uncomfortable.) With Adolphe Menjou—a cartoon of a wily general, and George Macready as another general.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; Sept. 10.)

sex, lies, and videotape—Steven Soderbergh's smooth, handsome first feature generates a fair degree of psychological tension out of next to nothing. It's a triangle drama with a cunning little kink in it. The triangle consists of Ann (Andie MacDowell), a beautiful young Southern woman who has "never really been that much into sex"; her husband, John (Peter Gallagher), a sleazy yuppie lawyer; and her younger sister, Cynthia (Laura San Giacomo), who's sleeping with John. The kink is an old college pal of John's, named Graham (James Spader), a soft-spoken drifter who comes to town and changes everybody's life. Graham has sworn off sex, because, he says, it's the only way for him to stay honest; he's impotent, except when he's watching one of his dozens of home videos—all of them interviews he has conducted with women about sex. He's like a retired gunslinger, a laconic hombre who won't pull his artillery out of its holster because he's seen too much killin' already. This is "Shane" remade as a Southern psychodrama. But there's some real conviction in it—a mixed-up fervor that keeps us watching.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Plaza, Waverly, and Cinema Studio.)

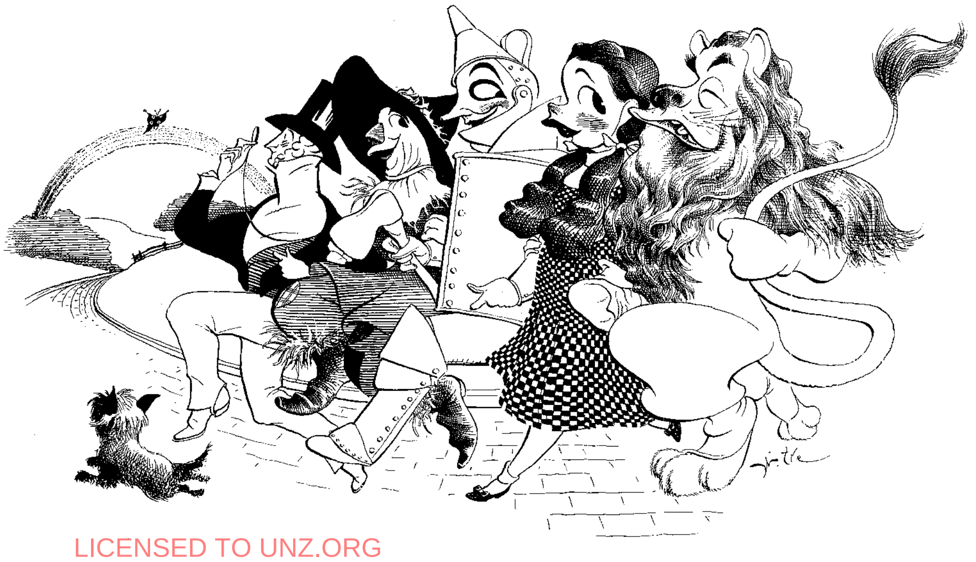
Shirley Valentine—Willy Russell, who wrote the play (and the movie) "Educating Rita," gives us another Englishwoman learning a thing or two about life. This time, it's a housewife in her forties whose kids are grown and gone and whose husband is so unresponsive that she spends a lot of time talking to the kitchen wall. A friend persuades her to come along on a two-week holiday in Greece, and Shirley, away from her dull husband and her constricted life, starts to enjoy herself for the first time since her adolescence. But she's not just having a fling or reliving her giddy youth—the writer wants us to understand that she's experiencing deeper, maturer pleasures. Russell's script is an adaptation of his play, which was a monologue. Though this isn't a one-woman show anymore, it's still a showcase for perky, round-faced Pauline Collins. She's very likable, and her performance is mercifully restrained. Lewis Gilbert's direction is long on maturity and short on pleasure: the picture moves at a careful, measured, guided-tour pace. When a movie's as stodgy and lulling as this, we're likely to have some trouble accepting it as a ringing affirmation of life. By the end, poor Shirley seems more than ever like a lost soul: an Edna O'Brien character who woke up and found herself on "The Love Boat." Also with Tom Conti, Julia McKenzie, Alison Steadman, Bernard Hill, Joanna Lumley, and Sylvia Syms.—T.R. (9/4/89) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

Throne of Blood (1957)—Kurosawa's wild and fine version of "Macbeth," with Toshiro Mifune, set in sixteenth-century Japan. The soundtrack pounds with noises of armor and horses' hooves; Shakespeare's main sense is kept, and so are his abiding strokes of theatre, especially when the mists of the picture part to show Birnam Wood coming to Dunsinane, one of the truly alarming shots in world cinema. In Japanese.—P.G. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 11.)

When Harry Met Sally . . .—Rob Reiner's movie, from a script by Nora Ephron, takes a screwball-comedy idea and inflates it like a rubber raft. Harry (Billy Crystal) and Sally (Meg Ryan) meet in the late seventies, rub each other the wrong way, and then, after breaking up with their partners, become close friends; all the while, they're conducting a running debate on the question "Can a man and a woman ever be just friends, without sex getting in the way?" It's a Rohmer movie played as a sitcom. Crystal muddles through amiably, but Ryan flounders: the filmmakers give her impossible, unplayable scenes, and all she can do is be adorable. The movie keeps telling us that it's real and truthful and universal. Everything in it seems false. Also with Carrie Fisher and Bruno Kirby.—T.R. (8/7/89) (Beekman, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Regency.)

The Wizard of Oz (1939)—Heavenly. Judy Garland as Dorothy, Bert Lahr as the Cowardly Lion, Ray Bolger as the Scarecrow, and Jack Haley as the Tin Woodman. Directed by Victor Fleming.—P.K. (Gramercy, and Festival.)

Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown—The most original pop writer-director of the eighties, Pedro Almodóvar is Godard with a human face—a happy face. The artificial is what sends him sky high, and the Madrid of this film is (as the closing song has it) "Puro Teatro." This is a movie where after a while you can't tell sexy from funny. Pepa (Carmen Maura), an actress who works in TV and commercials, turns on her answering machine and learns that she has been jilted. Infuriated, she dashes around, on spike heels, in a short, tight skirt, trying to confront her longtime live-in lover, the elegant, vain Iván (Fernando Guillén). The women of the title include Iván's early lover (Julieta Serrano), his new lover (Kiti Manver), and two (Rossy De Palma and María Barranco) who are involved with his son (Antonio Banderas). Sleek-legged and chic, they run the theatrical gamut. Cinematography by José Luis Alcaine. In Spanish.—P.K. (11/14/88) (Bleecker Street Cinema.)



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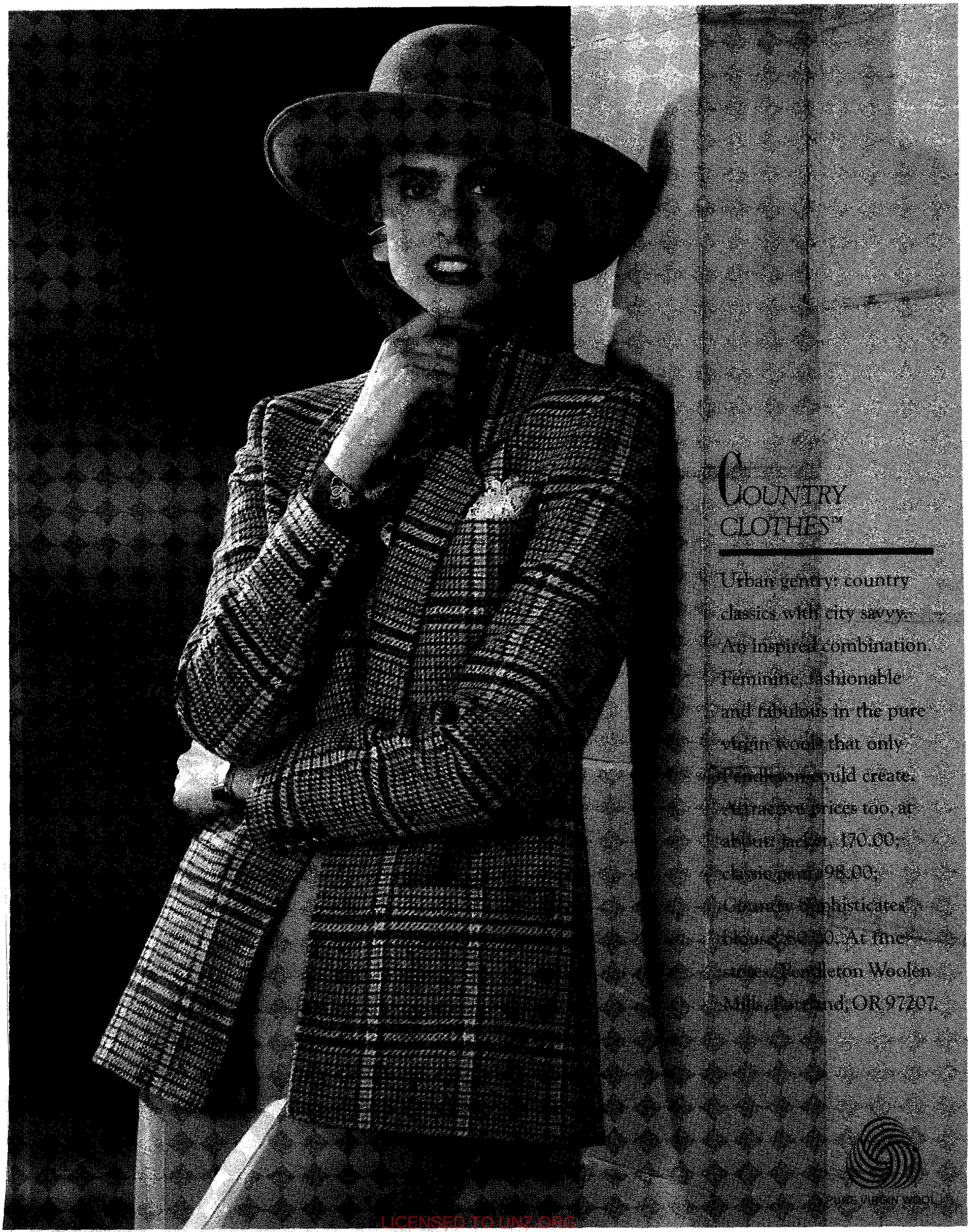

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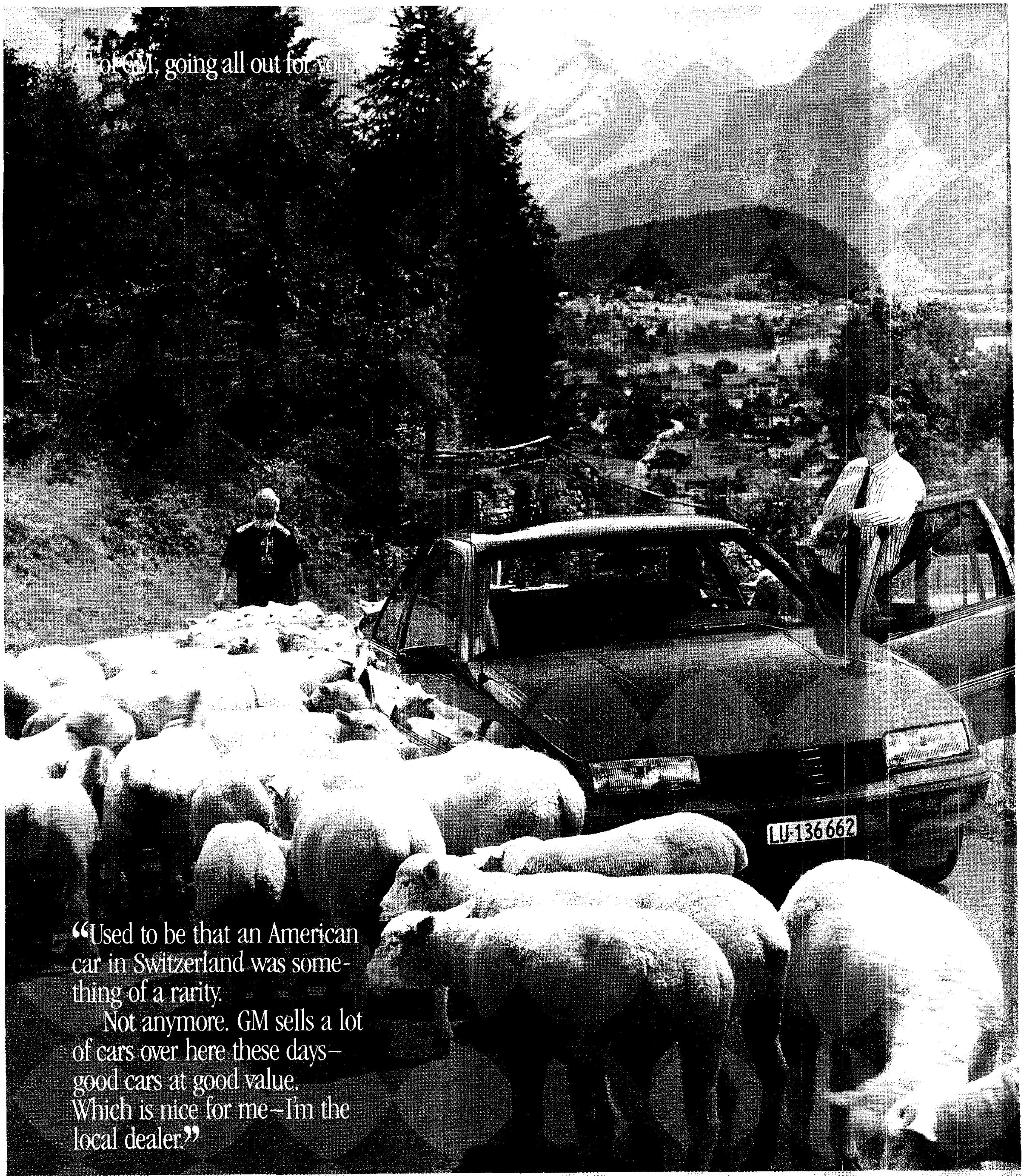

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

A FRIEND from Texas writes: The death of Mickey Leland, when the twin-engine plane that was carrying him and his fifteen companions flew into Tamsi Mountain, in Ethiopia, touched the nation and the world. Just why it did has an importance that is independent of the fortnight's attention to the story in the press everywhere.

Mickey was born black in Houston's desolate inner-city Fifth Ward. "I come from a very poor family," he said last May. "My mother was kicked out of her house by her husband, my father." His mother succeeded in putting him through college, and then he became a civil-rights activist in Houston. In 1970, he was arrested—bloody, his shirt torn off—following a confrontation with police. But after that he decided to work for change within the system, and he was elected first to the Texas legislature and then to Congress. There he became a model reform politician, working quietly among his colleagues to achieve his idealistic goals.

Mickey composed a number of short poems in his head, but he may have written down only one of them, an exclamatory poem, or anti-poem, which he recited sometimes when he was moved. One Christmas Eve in the seventies, at my home, he began to recite it, at my request:

> Confusion triumphs! Chaos smiles!
> And World mourns in despair. . . .

About a third of the way through, he broke off. "I can't do it," he said. "Wow. I just thought about them cats in prison." It was his custom to visit prisoners every Christmas Day. Perhaps the warmth and festiveness of that evening—firelight, decorated tree, packages piled around its base—had turned his mind inward to the bleakness he would enter the next day, for his rarest personal characteristic, which was also the most important one in his public life, was his ability to imagine, and his will not to forget about, the sufferings of people he did not know.

In 1983, as a member of Congress, he made the first of his seven or eight flights to the makeshift camps of the destitute in Africa. The next year, he persuaded the House to establish, and therefore became the chairman of, the House Select Committee on Hunger. That was the time of this decade's most calamitous African famine, in the sub-Sahara. Returning from another trip there, Leland told Kathy Kiely, of the Houston *Post*, "I was approached by an elderly lady just touching her stomach, begging for food. I looked beyond her and I saw thousands and thousands of people begging. I don't know if I can convey what it did to me as a human being." In 1985, he led the drive in Congress for emergency aid to the sub-Sahara which resulted in a remarkable appropriation of eight hundred million dollars.

All through what turned out to be the last few years of his life, Leland worked to understand, and to get Congress to act further against, hunger and its consequent illnesses and deaths. "It's a white mark on America's history for us to have hungry children in our society," he said. "White, versus black, mark." Most of his moral imagination was occupied by the dimensions of desperate need throughout the world. He introduced legislation to create an international health corps, "to wage war . . . in the field with health care professionals," that would be "something on the scale of the Peace Corps." During a hearing last year on the survival of children, he said, "In a country which expends such incredible sums of money on armies and weapons and on the pursuit of entertainment and pleasure, we can surely afford the few dollars it requires to immunize a child against polio . . . the few cents it costs to . . . save a child from death by dehydration." During his 1988 campaign for reëlection, Leland was accused in Houston of caring more about foreigners than about his own constituents, and the accusation provoked him to one of his most advanced declarations: "I am as much a citizen of this world as I am of this country."

On August 7th, Leland and his party boarded a de Havilland Twin Otter in Addis Ababa and took off to fly two hundred and ten miles west to Fugnido, a camp near Ethiopia's border with the Sudan which holds thousands upon thousands of refugees from the war in that country. The plane did not arrive, and a widening search was carried on during the next week, gradually becoming a death watch. On August 13th, the searchers found the wreckage of the plane, with everyone dead. Off course to the north, and forty-five miles northeast of the camp, the plane had smashed into the forty-five-hundred-foot Tamsi, about three hundred feet below its peak.

This drama of growing anxiety, combined with the fact that Leland had been leading a group to help the starving, captured the world press, and led to grief that, apparently, affected millions of people. It was as if goodness of heart and the courage to act had themselves been killed, and as if their death had unfolded on television, the theatre of the real for our slowly bonding community of the world.

When Mickey flew into the sixty-degree bluff three hundred feet below the mountaintop, he flew into the nation's and the world's answer to his crusade. We are not ready yet, and we are not organized yet, to clear that mountaintop. Still, the general mourning for Mickey and his fellow-pilgrims suggests that Randy Katsoyannis, the staff chief for the Select Committee on Hunger, may have been right when she said, a few days ago, "With his death Mickey has accomplished his mission—to have more people feel like they're citizens of the world."

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Gems

IF you're looking for a scratchy black-and-white replay of the first national soap-box derby, in 1934, or of Chicago roadside billboards coaxing nineteen-forties motorists to buy Camel cigarettes and Good Luck margarine, or for a glimpse of biplane skywriters inscribing Chevrolet slogans on a Michigan sky, Rick Prelinger is your man. Operating out of three cramped rooms that overlook a cobblestoned corner of West Fourteenth Street, in the wholesale meat district, Prelinger maintains the nation's largest private collection of "ephemeral films"—his term for educational, safety, and promotional movies that were shown decades ago at school assemblies and civic clubs, and long since discarded. To him these cast-off reels—roughly twenty thousand vintage films, dating back to 1915—are the Dead Sea Scrolls of Americana, unwittingly chronicling the everyday mores and manners of the nation's past, from hygiene to headgear, from ballroom dancing to the birth of the Bomb. So when Prelinger invited us to help him screen some new acquisitions we went right over.

We found Prelinger, a soft-spoken thirty-six-year-old with a jack-o'-lantern grin, nearly hidden among heaps of rusty film cans that reached almost to the ceiling. He plucked a reel labelled "Corn Husking Contest" from its can, explaining that it was one of about forty silent films shot by the owner of a movie theatre in the farm town of Britton, South Dakota, in the late nineteen-thirties. This amateur director documented local events, Prelinger said, and showed them as shorts before his theatre's feature. "It's just a record of everyday life there—a community looking at itself," he added, loading the film onto a viewer.

Someone might as well have thrust a movie camera into Norman Rockwell's hands: Men wearing overalls and black hats smiled shyly out from the screen as they flipped ears of corn into a horse-drawn wagon. A man standing on what was unmistakably Main Street spoke with gusto into a bulbous old-fashioned microphone, presumably announcing the contest winners. On a second reel from Britton, labelled "Sheriff's Office—Walking with Prisoners," a craggy-faced culprit wearing handcuffs glared at the camera as plainclothesmen led him on a chain to a waiting car. On a third, "Snowstorm," men bundled in overcoats shovelled black jalopies out from under a blizzard, pausing periodically to clown for the camera.

We felt for a moment as if those people were *our* neighbors and friends; they seemed somehow familiar—fifty years distant, but lurking, like obscure relatives, on the fringes of our recollection. "It's such a great record of how people dressed and smiled and walked," Prelinger said. "You sometimes think people's faces looked different back then, but it's probably just the hair styles."

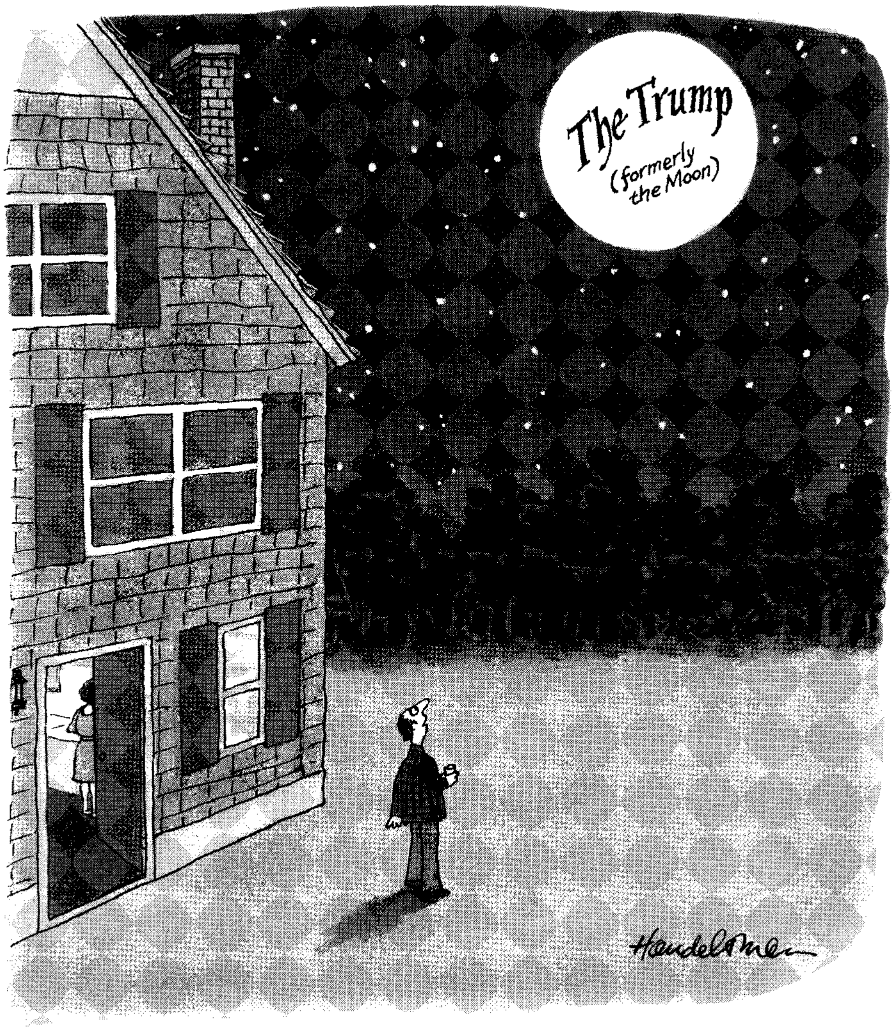
Prelinger put South Dakota aside, and after a short intermission we settled into "The Egg and Us," a 1949 paean to United States Savings Bonds as the foundation of family nest eggs. Of an opening montage of steam shovels and steel mills he said, "You don't see this kind of promotional emphasis on industrial extraction anymore. Digging and mining aren't hip, because they're considered raping the earth. The basis of American productivity is now regarded as brains, not brawn."

Next up: "6½ Magic Hours," an early promotion for Pan Am's commercial jet service to Europe. "I guess this is about convincing people that flying is safe," Prelinger said as the musical score swelled in a crescendo and stewardesses laden with trays of goodies swept down the aisle. "There's a gentle, prescriptive quality. It's one of those films about a new phenomenon that actually just lay out the etiquette."

A former Berkeley film student, Prelinger has always been attuned to the cultural messages behind kitsch. His collection began in 1982, he told us, with the acquisition of "When You Are a Pedestrian" (1948), a cautionary tale of sidewalk safety which alternates shots of real-life traffic with animated demonstrations of model cars toppling stick figures on a feltboard street. "Although that film shows these laughable near-misses, I was powerfully impressed by it as a document of what Oakland, California, once looked like," he said. Over the next year, he salvaged thousands of similar films from retired projectionists, public schools, and defunct movie labs across the country—such relics as "What to Do on a Date" (weenie roast or taffy pull?), "The Chicken of Tomorrow" (plumper poultry, thanks to feed laced with antibiotics), and "Death to Weeds" (pesticides delivering a death sentence to unwanted flora). To support his habit, the hobbyist turned entrepreneur in 1984, and began handing out grainy fragments of the past to producers of documentaries, news broadcasts, commercials, and rock videos, at prices ranging up to ninety dollars a second.

Prelinger hopes to use the historical treasures in his private film vault to assemble documentaries on such topics as sex roles, car culture, and the history of advertising. Right now, though, he faces a more urgent chore—

screening and cataloguing some ten thousand newly obtained titles that have been pouring in from all over the country. As he looked around him at the innumerable cans of film, he remarked, "From this, gems emerge." And, even as new arrivals cascade about him, he is scouting for more. "I'm continuing my crusade to clear out producers' dusty basements," he said.



"Honey, would you come out here for a minute?"

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Muttontown's King

WE confess to not knowing much about Albania except the essentials: private cars are forbidden, men do not wear beards, adulterers can be sent to labor camps, state-owned stores sell one style of women's shoes, all religion is unconstitutional, and in a recent election all 1,830,653 eligible voters cast their ballots for the ruling party (one voting paper was found invalid). Since diplomatic relations between the United States and this remarkable nation were broken off fifty years ago last June—an anniversary that somehow passed unnoticed—it was with some surprise that we recently learned how close the United States once came to harboring Albania's first, and only, king. Just as fascinating as the odyssey of Zog I, we soon discovered, is the existing evidence of this failed venture: the ruins of a Long Island mansion that he hoped to occupy in exile with his royal entourage.

A few weeks ago, while taking Route 106 to Muttontown, the site of the ruins, we reviewed the singular life of Albania's monarch, whose full name means Bird the First, King of the Sons of the Eagle. Ahmed Bey Zogu, born in 1895, battled innumerable Balkan adversaries to consolidate control of his country after the First World War, became President in 1925, and declared himself King Zog I in 1928. For his coronation he ordered an outfit that included rose-colored breeches, gold spurs, and a gold crown weighing seven and five-eighths pounds.

Zog's chief preoccupation once he was on the throne was how to stay alive. In 1931, he barely escaped assassination at the hands of two gunmen as he was leaving a performance of "Pagliacci" at the Vienna Opera House. His mother kept watch over the royal kitchen to make sure his food was not being poisoned. A virtual recluse in his capital city, Tiranë, which in any case had neither night clubs nor theatres, Zog did little except play poker and smoke as many as a hundred and fifty perfumed cigarettes a day. Understandably, perhaps, shaking Europe's royal family trees for a queen yielded Zog no fruit. But his four sisters, each of them a division commander in the Albanian Army and none of them married themselves, helped in the search, and he eventually found a penniless half-American, half-Hungarian countess, Geraldine Apponyi, who had been selling postcards in the Budapest National Museum for forty-five dollars a month. Her photograph captured Zog's heart, and they were married in 1938.

A year later, Italy invaded Albania, routing its thirteen thousand troops and two airplanes within forty-eight hours. Having fled to England with his family and a hefty portion of his country's gold, Zog watched from afar as Mussolini's Fascists and then Enver Hoxha's Communists took over his kingdom. Zog was formally deposed in absentia in 1946. Having temporarily moved to Egypt, he became friends with King Farouk while he pondered the serious question of where an ex-monarch could live.

He found the answer, he thought, during a 1951 tour of the United States: Knollwood, a sixty-room granite mansion that had been built on Long Island's North Shore in 1907. Zog bought it for $102,800 (not for "a bucket of diamonds and rubies," as some stories claimed at the time). Italian Renaissance in style, Knollwood boasted tall Ionic columns and a winding main stairway of Caen marble. Massive stone steps led down to vast reaches of landscaping, with gardens and reflecting pools. English ivy covered parts of wide terraces and also hung from marble fountains and urns. "A man must have a place to lay his head," the *Times* commented, "and if Zog feels that he must have sixty rooms to do it in, that is his business."

Zog, it was announced, intended to turn Knollwood into his kingdom in exile. In its grounds would live Albanian subjects, working the land as his tenants. North Shore society, delighted at the prospect of royalty in its back yard, was soon flocking to Knollwood. At its gates, visitors were greeted by a bearded member of the Royal Guard: he would kiss their hands and turn them away.

Alas, Zog wanted to settle into the mansion with his entire court, of a hundred and fifteen, but the immigration authorities would allow him to bring only twenty into the country. Attempts to bribe the State Department failed, and in 1952 he was forced to pay $2,914 in taxes to save his property, having been unable to convince Nassau County that as a monarch he had sovereign immunity from such trifles. In 1955, he sold Knollwood, which had meanwhile suffered eight thousand dollars' worth of damage from vandals. The vandals thereupon converged on the estate in earnest, ripping it apart in search of treasure that was rumored to be buried in its grounds. The mansion was later demolished, and Zog spent his last days in a nearly empty villa on the French Riviera, with Queen Geraldine doing the housework. He died in 1961.

In 1968, Nassau County acquired what was left of Knollwood and incorporated it into the Muttontown Preserve, a five-hundred-and-fifty-acre wilderness featuring some eighty kinds of trees and over a hundred varieties of flowering plants. On our arrival there, instead of being received by a bearded guard we were confronted by a sign warning us to beware of ticks. We rolled down our shirtsleeves and chose the least circuitous of many dirt trails leading to the ruins.

Half an hour later, we arrived at a sunken garden in front of Knollwood's gray stone foundation. The stones were marred by graffiti: "SEX + DRUGS + ROCK-N-ROLL" and, fittingly, what appeared to be a crown. Strewn amid the ivy were broken bricks, chunks of balustrade, and large fragments of capstones. Huge niches flanked immense, mud-choked flights of steps leading down to a chipped but still distinctly cherubic fountain. In our mind's eye we could see Zog surveying his domain from the terrace at the top of the steps, wearing, of course, his rose-colored breeches and gold spurs.

Two pavilions stood beyond the main building. Their columns and entablatures were intact, but their roofs had caved in, burying the bases of the columns in masses of stone, concrete, and jagged metal lathing. A pile of charred branches and empty beer bottles further littered one of the structures. Between the pavilions were steps descending to a curved allée of trees and ivy, beyond which we could see the remains of a summerhouse. That was the place, we decided, where if things had turned out differently King Zog would have stopped late in the afternoon, after a day of court engagements, to smoke a perfumed cigarette.

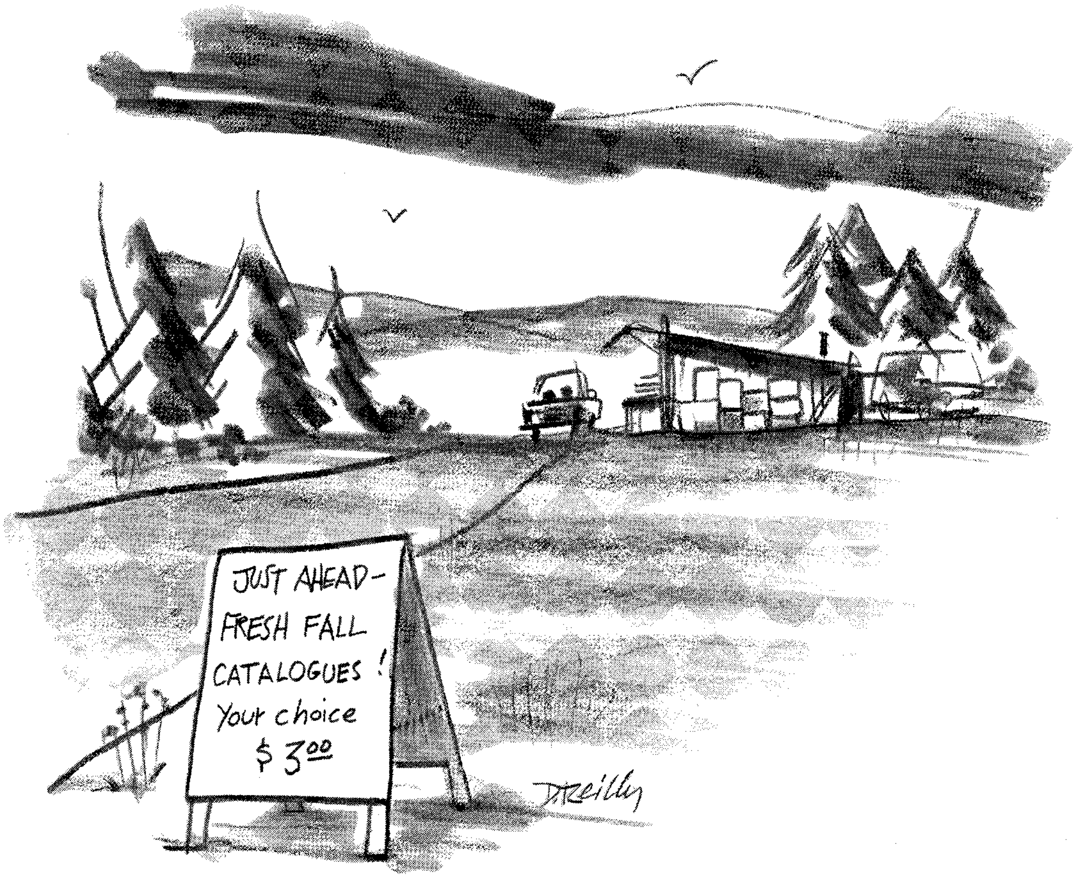
The Wedding

A BRIDEGROOM writes:

When we decided to get married after being together for twelve years, we felt that a formal or traditional wedding ceremony would not be appropriate. But when we told our families, friends, and acquaintances that we planned to get married in a civil ceremony in the Municipal Building the typical reaction (after a tiresome number of "It's about time"s) was "How unromantic."

We did not agree. We found the idea of the two of us stealing away to marry in semi-secrecy extremely romantic. If only we had been as misunderstood as the young lovers of the great teen anthems! But both of us were thirteen years past even the last year of teenhood. And our parents approved of the union.

We met during our third year of college, and our years together raced by. We never talked much about formalizing our relationship (was a piece of paper supposed to change something?), and never underwent pressure from either set of parents. The only times we mentioned marriage were when we discussed having children, and then we just concluded that if we ever did want to have them marriage would prob-



ably be a good idea.

Actually, it *was* an addition to the family that prompted our decision, although not the kind of addition we had foreseen. We became the proud owners of a co-op apartment, our first, and that made us think it was time to grow up, become responsible, and do what had to be done. This isn't nearly as unromantic as it sounds; after all, our loving and, yes, romantic relationship had already lasted six times as long as the average modern marriage. So the week we closed on our co-op loan, moved, and began a renovation, we also got married. (Maybe next week we could have kids and retire, we joked.) Our bosses urged us to take not just our lunch hour for the wedding, as we had planned, but *the whole day*. (Could it be that our bosses are more romantic than we are?)

On the morning of the special day, we got up, dressed (a tie and a blazer for me, a simple green dress for my bride), received congratulations in a couple of languages from our construction crew, and headed downtown on the No. 4 subway for a noon rendezvous with a friend from college who was to be our witness.

From the Brooklyn Bridge station we made our way to the waiting room outside the city chapel, on the second floor of the Municipal Building, at 1 Centre Street. The room held about two hundred black plastic seats in rows but was painted a defiantly non-institutional robin's-egg blue and had navy-blue carpeting. Our friend and her husband arrived with a bouquet of white freesias, a bottle of champagne, and a wedding cake—a carrot cake, which was the first cake she had ever baked, and which was topped with a plastic bride and groom.

After paying a five-dollar fee at the front desk, we were told to be seated—a deputy from the city clerk's office would be with us soon. About a dozen other couples were already seated, and I asked the woman at the desk how many couples got married in the chapel on a typical day. She said about seventy-five, though on Valentine's Day the figure might be a couple of hundred.

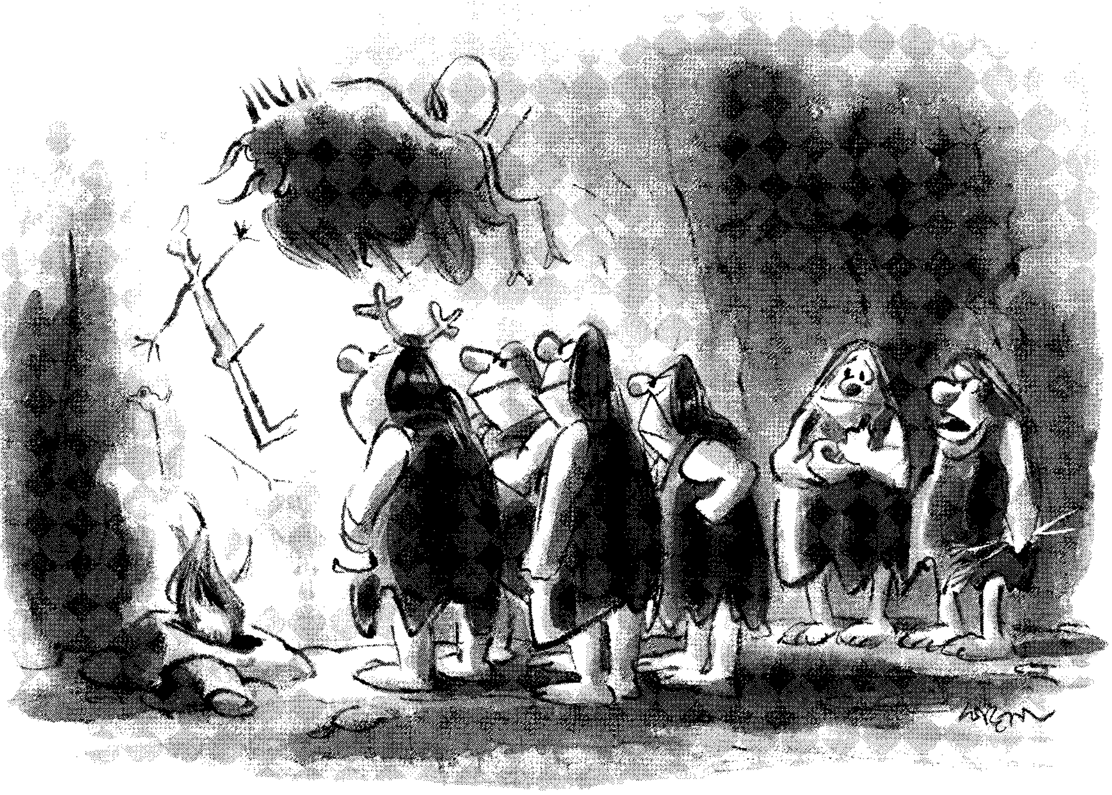
Our friend asked us if we were nervous, and we told her we were not. Since we'd had a dozen years to think about it, and since we were still together, getting married was not exactly a daunting prospect.

A middle-aged man came in, called our names, opened a frosted-glass door, and ushered us into the chapel. Compared with the Department of Motor Vehicles, the place was downright picturesque, and was obviously the product of much thought. It was a small, U-shaped room with vermilion wall-to-wall carpeting and white wallpaper that had a wood-grainy texture. Two small benches upholstered in royal-blue velours stood against the back wall. Behind a dark-colored wooden podium, which had the seal of the City of New York on its front, was an odd-shaped, airy wooden screen that might have come from the background of a painting by Yves Tanguy.

Our escort, who looked very friendly and not at all jaded, took his place behind the podium. The ceremony went quickly: after only about a minute we were pronounced man and wife. Nonetheless, it was a source of deep-felt emotion. As I listened to the words of the ceremony, I thought I had never been more sure of anything in my life than I was of what I was doing right then. When I was asked if I intended to be with this woman in sickness and in health, as long as we both live, I replied, "I certainly do."

After hugs, kisses, handshakes, and a brief photo session with the man who had married us, we left the chapel with our champagne, our carrot wedding cake, and our flowers. Out in the hallway, we passed a line at least fifty feet long snaking toward the Financial Disclosure Office. Obviously, these people were not in the mood for any kind of frivolity, but when they noticed us, smiles, congratulations, and applause moved down their line in a wave that accompanied us until we got into the elevator.

Now, isn't that romantic?



"Damn! There goes our funding."

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BREAD, BUTTER, AND FLORRIE FORD

BREAD

I WAS born in Edinburgh, at 160 Bruntsfield Place, the Morningside district, in 1918. In those days, bread came from Howden's, the shop above the ovens where it was made. The pavement outside the shop was warm, and hot air steamed out of a grating near the door. The floury baker and his boy (known, not unkindly, as "the daft laddie," since he was rather simple) were white all over, the baker wore a white hat, flat at the top like an upturned pie dish, the boy's was also flat-topped; they carried trays of bread on their heads. As they came up with their trays of bread into the shop, their faces and hands, their overalls were white, and their shoes were flour-dusted.

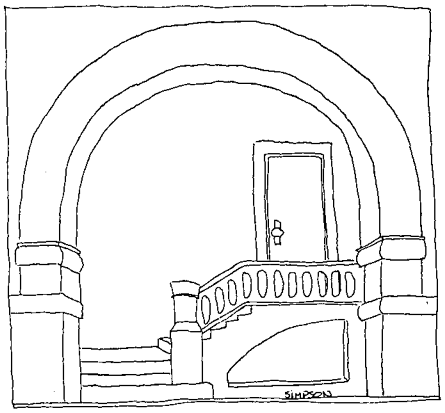
Bread came in many forms, including high pan, square pan, and cottage loaf. Of the first two, you could buy a half pan or a whole pan, according to your needs. High pan was an arch-topped rectangle, and made thin slices that, cut diagonally and spread with jam, were elegant for afternoon tea. Square pans were simply square, good for making up a lunch, known as a piece, to take to work or school. They were also better for making breakfast toast. A cottage loaf looked like a domed chapel with a small square annex.

In the morning, warm, round bappy rolls with a powdering of flour were procured from the baker, as were bran scones, triangular and made of brown flour—virtuous, good for your health. Oat cakes, triangular biscuits, were even healthier. In the afternoon came a fresh supply of breads, sometimes Sally Lunns, embedded with currants and raisins. In Edinburgh the favorite teatime bread was a shearer's bap, which was flat and warm. ("Bapper" is the Scottish word for baker.) Soda scones were generally made at home, but Howden's, too, did a brisk afternoon trade in those small, sharp-tasting lumps, thirsty for butter.

BUTTER

BUTTER came from the Buttercup Dairy Company. A pink-and-white-complexioned girl with her hair in a cap and wearing a sparkling white overall stood behind the marble-topped counter, beside two huge slabs of butter, which reached to her shoulder. One of these slabs was fresh butter, and the other was salt. Salt butter was cheaper, and many people preferred it. Fresh butter was brought in from the farm every morning. The pink-and-white girl took a slice of greaseproof paper and laid it on the bright brass scales. She then took two large wooden butter pats, one in each hand, and before she cut off your daily pound or half pound of butter she dipped them into a blue-and-white porcelain bowl of cold water. With her pats she placed each portion of butter deftly on the scales to be weighed, and she added or took away like a sculptor with his clay until she had achieved the required weight. Then came the beautiful and clever part. The girl placed her butter, in its paper, on the counter; next, with her pats, she cut it into cubic portions—small cubes of about a quarter of a pound—and then swiftly and neatly she worked each small cube into a flat round. Finally she took a wooden butter stamp and, after dipping it in water, stamped each butter medallion with a sharp slap. The imprint that was left was surrounded at the edge with the words "Buttercup Dairy Company," and in the middle, on the butter, was the form of a small girl kneeling on one knee beside a friendly cow, under whose chin she held a buttercup. All this butter performance took place in a twinkling of an eye.

From the Buttercup, as we called the shop, we also obtained eggs of various grades. New-laid eggs were best for breakfast, but preserved eggs, which had been laid down in brine, were cheaper and perfectly adequate for cake-making. One day the Buttercup installed a fascinating egg X-ray, on which each egg was placed before it was sold. The inward egg lit up, a bright transparent gold, proving the egg was good. If it had been a bad egg, it would have shown green, but I never saw one of those. God knows what harm those X rays did us.



Before leaving the shop, as, indeed, every shop, you counted your change very carefully in case of mistakes. This performance was attentively watched by the assistant who had served you.

It was with the Buttercup Dairy Company that I associated Robert Louis Stevenson's lines from my earliest infancy:

> One morning, very early, before the sun
> was up,
> I rose and found the shining dew on
> every buttercup

And the sparkle and morning freshness of the shop and the butter-conjuring girl formed a mind picture that accompanied the whole of my youth.

TEA

SIXTY years ago is a short time in history. As recently as that, I made at least one pot of tea for the family every day. It was delicious tea. Every schoolgirl, every schoolboy knew how to make that exquisite pot of tea.

You boiled the kettle, and just before it came to the boil you half filled the teapot to warm it. When the kettle came to the boil, you kept it simmering while you threw out the water in the teapot and then put in a level spoonful of tea for each person and one for the pot. Up to four spoonfuls of tea from that sweetly odorous tea caddy would make the perfect pot. The caddy spoon was a special shape, like a small silver shovel. You never took the kettle to the teapot; always the pot to the kettle, where you filled it, but never to the brim.

You let it stand, to "draw," for three minutes.

The tea had to be drunk out of china, as thin at the rim as you could afford. Otherwise you lost the taste of the tea.

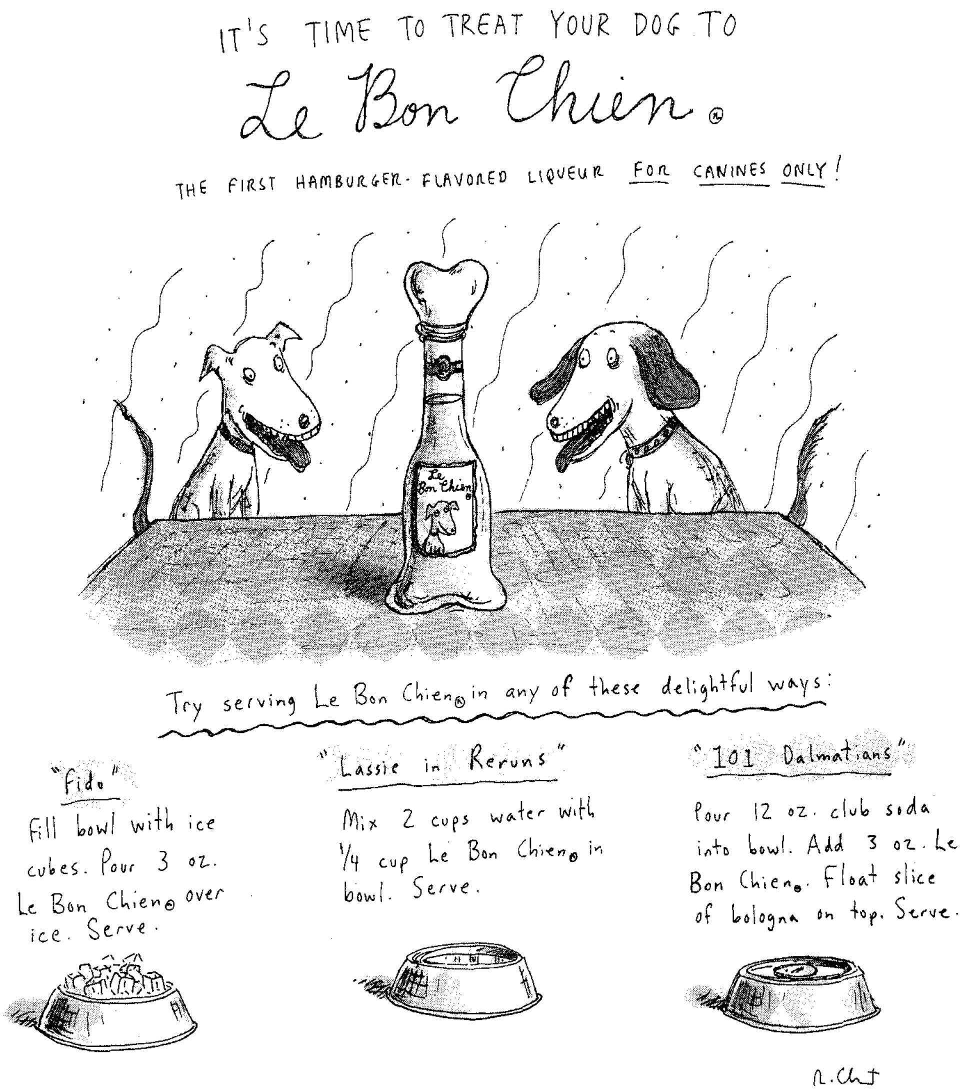
You put in milk sufficient to cloud the clear liquid, and sugar if you had a sweet tooth. Sugar or not was the only personal choice allowed.

Everyone who came to the house was offered a cup of tea, as in Dostoyevski. What his method of making tea was I don't know.

Tea at five o'clock was an occasion

for visitors. One ate bread and butter first, graduating to cakes and biscuits. Five-o'clock tea was something you "took." If you had it at six, you "ate" your tea.

Tea at half past six was high tea—a full meal, which resembled breakfast. You had kippers, haddock, ham, eggs, or sausages for high tea. Potatoes did not accompany this meal. But a pot of tea, with bread, butter, and jam, was always part of it.


IT'S TIME TO TREAT YOUR DOG TO
Le Bon Chien®
THE FIRST HAMBURGER-FLAVORED LIQUEUR FOR CANINES ONLY!
Le Bon Chien
Try serving Le Bon Chien® in any of these delightful ways:
"Fido"
Fill bowl with ice cubes. Pour 3 oz. Le Bon Chien® over ice. Serve.
"Lassie in Reruns"
Mix 2 cups water with 1/4 cup Le Bon Chien® in bowl. Serve.
"101 Dalmatians"
Pour 12 oz. club soda into bowl. Add 3 oz. Le Bon Chien®. Float slice of bologna on top. Serve.

AUNTIE GERTIE AND FLORRIE FORD

"THE English" in the Edinburgh of my childhood were considered to be superficial and hypocritical. And overdressed. My mother, who was English, used to come and fetch me from school. It was my daily dread that she would open her mouth and thus betray her suspect origins. "Foreigners" were fairly tolerated, but "the English" were something quite different. It was not only the accent that betrayed Englishness. It was also turns of phrase and idiomatic usage. One day, outside the school, I heard my mother remark to another mother, "I have some shopping to do." I nearly died. She should have said, "I've got to get the messages," that's what she should have said. My mother also wore a winter coat trimmed with beige fox fur in the style of the then Duchess of York, now the Queen Mother (who still, and sublimely, wears those fox-trimmed coats). This was entirely out of place. My mother ought to have worn tweed or, in very cold weather, musquash ("muskrat" in America). My mother wore peach-colored silk or rayon stockings, which should have been lisle thread, gray. It was only through her natural amiability to everyone she encountered that she managed to squeeze by the censor. She completely enjoyed meeting and greeting people. Before I was born she had been a "teacher of pianoforte." I still have her brass plate inscribed to that effect.

My father spoke with a strong Edinburgh accent, and although he was a Jew, he had been born and educated in Edinburgh of Scottish-Jewish parents, and wore the same sort of clothes as the other fathers and spoke as they did, about the same things. So he was no problem. He was an engineer. I still have the contract of his seven-year apprenticeship, signed, in schoolboy calligraphy, "Bertie Camberg."

"Scotch or English?" was a game played by rough boys. They would tie a stone to a length of string and whirl it around, accosting other boys with the challenge: "Are you Scotch or English?" The invariable response was to say "English" and run fast. The essence of the game was the ensuing chase and stone-batter. There were no real English boys involved.

At home, if I left the tap running in the bathroom, my mother would say, "Turn off the tap," but my father's command was "Turn off the well." Taps were also wells to his young sister, my Auntie Gertie, as they were to our God-fearing neighbors. Auntie Gertie stayed with us for a while. She went out with boyfriends, dressed in a short-skirted navy-blue outfit and a cherry-red hat that hugged her bobbed hair. She regarded most of her boyfriends as objects of amusement, regaling us, on her return, with pointed, merry anecdotes. Once, when she had been taken to admire a beauty spot, my auntie remarked, in her lively way, "Very pictureskew!" To which the boyfriend solemnly replied, "Oh, is *that* how it's pronounced?"

We often laughed at others in our house, and I picked up the craft of being polite while people were present and laughing later if there was anything to laugh about, or criticizing later if there was anything to deplore. At this time I must have been four or five. Sometimes people got nicknames for use amongst ourselves. Like other nuggets of my early childhood, they continue to gleam in my mind, although often I forget who the people were to whom the nicknames were attached. One friend of a friend, whom my mother and I encountered sometimes at the putting green of Bruntsfield Links, was called the Ray of Sunshine. She was lodging with a couple known to my parents; the husband had assured them that this lady was “a ray of sunshine.” In reality she looked terribly grim as she tried in a vexed way to get her golf ball into the hole. “We met the Ray of Sunshine,” my mother blithely told my father when we got home for tea.

I had been given a dolls’ pram constructed for twins, with a folding hood at each end. My dolls, Red Rosie and Queenie, sat facing each other. I remember one day I was crying and bawling for some reason. My father fetched a facecloth and wiped the faces of my two dolls, bidding them each not to cry. I was so fascinated by this performance that I stopped crying, and I distinctly recall experiencing a sensation or instinct that, if I could have put it into words, would have been “I’m not taken in by this ruse, but at the same time what a good child psychologist he is!”

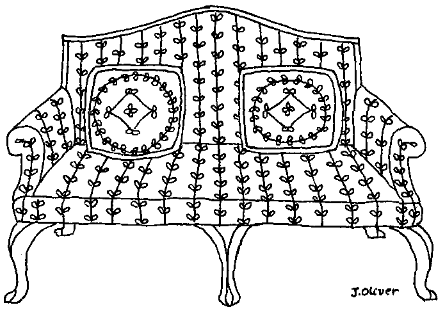
It must have been about 1923, just before I went to school, that I went to my first theatre show, a matinée at the Lyceum. It was surely a public holiday, for neither Auntie Gertie nor my father went to work. Instead, my parents left me in charge of Gertie and went off in high spirits to the Musselborough races. Presumably, my brother, five years my elder, went with them or had been sent somewhere else. Auntie Gertie and I were alone. We had our lunch, which was “dinner” to us. She then dressed me in my best clothes, and, herself looking very natty in her cherry hat and her skirt that showed her knees, conveyed me forth to see Florrie Ford.

Florrie Ford was a music-hall performer. The house was packed. I had never been in a place so big, in such a big room, with so many people sitting in tiers going up and up. The curtain rose to reveal buxom Miss Ford, dressed in a one-piece suit resembling the modern body tights, all gold-bronze spangles.

There was a thunder of applause. I was used to hearing applause, because my parents used to have “musical evenings,” when my mother played, and my father sang “Forever and Forever,” or my mother herself sang “Rose in the Bud”; on such occasions our guests would clap their hands warmly at the end of the piece. But this applause, of Florrie Ford down there on the stage, was so vastly public that I was full of wonder at how she could carry it all without apparently feeling shy.

She carried it off as if the stage were her own home. Other people on the stage came and went, especially men in evening dress, but Florrie in her spangles dominated the enormous house. She sang to the accompaniment of an orchestra, and also danced. Only one of her numbers has remained in my memory. Miss Ford reclined glittering in the middle of the stage beside an enormous wireless set with multicolored illuminated “valves,” which looked like light bulbs. Radios with valves were then a luxury in our parts. My brother had only recently constructed a wireless set that was operated by a small lump of uneven and shining metal called “the crystal” and a wire called “the cat’s whisker.” It was a complicated and awe-inspiring contraption, which, when attached to headphones (thirty shillings) and acoustically tuned in with a tender scratching of the cat’s whisker on the crystal, gave us a fugitive and intermittent program from the BBC. A wireless set with valves (whatever they actually were) was as yet beyond our means. But not beyond Florrie Ford’s. She rested on one elbow and with the other hand twiddled the knobs on her glamorous wireless set; meanwhile she sang a slow song called “Dream, Daddy.”

Auntie Gertie and I were home before my parents returned from the races. By the time they arrived, the kitchen table was set for our tea. We hadn’t yet sat down; my parents were full of which horses had won a place and which, in my father’s words, were “still coming up the field.” And what had we done with our day?



TO A BOX TURTLE

Size of a small skull, and like a skull segmented,
of pentagons healed and varnished to form a dome,
you almost went unnoticed in the meadow,
among its tall grasses and serrated strawberry leaves
your mottle of amber and umber effective camouflage.

You were making your way through grave distances,
your forefeet just barely extended and as dainty as dried
coelacanth fins, as miniature sea fans, your black nails
decadent like a Chinese empress’s, and your head
a triangular snake-head, eyes ringed with dull gold.

Let me pick you up. Your silent head withdraws.
Your bottom plate, hinged once, presents a firm *No*
with its courteous waxed surface, a marquetry
of inlaid squares, fine-grained and tinted
tobacco-brown and the yellow of a pipe smoker’s teeth.

What are you thinking, thus sealed inside yourself?
My hand must have a smell, a killer’s warmth.
It holds you upside down, aloft, undignified,
your leathery person amazed in the floating dark.
How much pure fear can your wrinkled brain contain?

I put you down. Your tentative, stalk-bending walk
resumes. The manifold jewel of you melts into grass.
Power mowers have been cruel to your race, and creatures
less ornate and fantastic have long gone extinct;
yet nature’s tumults pool to form a giant peace.

—John Updike

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“We went to see Florrie Ford,” said Auntie Gertie, to such great amusement of my parents that my auntie looked at me in an almost fellow-juvenile amazement. My father and mother couldn’t stop laughing. “Gertie took her to see Florrie Ford,” my mother managed to splutter.

“They’re killing themselves laughing,” murmured my auntie.

And why they were standing there laughing in the kitchen, falling into each other’s arms in their mirth, I did not know and will never know.

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MRS. RULE, FISH JEAN, AND THE KAISER

I WAS fascinated from the earliest age I can remember by how people arranged themselves. I can’t remember a time when I was not a person-watcher, a behaviorist. I was also an avid listener. It seems to me that my parents’ friends and the people who called at our small flat were endless. I can remember the names and faces of people dating from my preschool years far better than any others at any other period of my life.

Most important to me were Mrs. Rule and her husband, Professor Rule, a young American couple. He was studying theology at Edinburgh University. They stayed with us for a time. I remember Mrs. Rule by the fireside, with her dimples and an exciting set of cards one inch square, each with a letter on it. With these she taught me to read, egged on by Andrew K. Rule, D.D., as I found out her husband was, when I was well able to read his name on an envelope. I was between the ages of three and four. It was an early start, although in Edinburgh at that time it was not unusual for children to read and write fluently before they were five. The firelight played on Mrs. Rule’s hands and face, on Professor Rule’s bearded smile, and on my lettered, red-backed cards on a tray before me, as I sat at the fire on a low puffy stool, while Mrs. Rule declared that a “t” and an “h” together sounded “th.” The Rules went home to America, from where they wrote letters to my mother, leaving with me the precious cards.

I knew about everyone who wrote letters to my parents and everyone who called at the house. We had a spatially small life, and my mother could never forbear to comment on any happening. I used to love the doorbell to ring.

And it was a joy to go out visiting with my mother. No special arrangements were made to entertain children. We were just brought along, and we were expected to sit quietly. Not all children liked to do this, but for me it was better that way. I liked to listen. Not only did I feel at home with the immense list of characters who peopled our lives, and who largely ignored me, but there were also those whom I knew by hearsay, and often I touched people who had touched real history.

Such a person was Mrs. Lippitz, as she was to us, Susan to her husband. I was aware that she was elderly. She sat every afternoon at the bow-fronted window of their ground-floor flat in Bruntsfield Crescent, a sweep of tall houses that had been constructed in 1870 and that one could see from our front windows. Mrs. Lippitz had been born in Alsace-Lorraine but spoke without a foreign accent. One day, when I accompanied my mother to her house, I heard her tell how, when she was a schoolgirl in Alsace-Lorraine, after the Franco-Prussian War, the children had to run and hide their French books, because the Kaiser was visiting. This must have been 1871, after the peace treaty of Frankfurt, when France ceded Alsace-Lorraine to the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm I. And it still amazes me to reflect that the childhood experience of my friend Mrs. Lippitz going back to 1871 coincided with the year of publication of “Middlemarch,” by George Eliot, “The Descent of Man,” by Charles Darwin, and “Through the Looking Glass,” by Lewis Carroll. At the time, of course, I had no historical awe, only an attraction to Mrs. Lippitz’s words “run and hide our French books” and “the Kaiser.” For a while I confused this Kaiser with the other Kaiser, his son, about whom people still talked. The Great War had only been over a few years.

Another legendary character, whom I missed by being born just too late, was Fish Jean, who was much reminisced over by my father and his friends. ("Do you mind Fish Jean?" they would say, meaning do you remember her.) The wonder of Fish Jean was not that, like other fishwives of the fairly prosperous Newhaven fishing community, she went through the streets crying her wares but that she did so in such flamboyant style. The driving seat of her horse cart had to be made specially wide to take Fish Jean's great girth; she wore large diamond rings on all her fingers down to the knuckles, and would plunge these diamond-covered hands in amongst her glittering herrings and mackerels, proudly to serve her customers.

Another person I never met except through hearsay was Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, the leader of the women's-rights movement of those days. Their main aim was to obtain the vote for women. My maternal grandmother, Adelaide Uezzell, in the Watford group of the Suffragette movement (as they called themselves), had marched with Mrs. Pankhurst, carrying an umbrella, as they all did. My grandmother told me about these events, from an early age. But it was too late for me to know or see Mrs. Pankhurst. I had to imagine the scene.

Mrs. Lippitz's Kaiser, my father's Fish Jean—dead, both dead before I could even set eyes on them. And my grandmother's Mrs. Pankhurst—to me only an item of hearsay.

COMMODITIES

SHOPPING with my mother was a geography lesson, although she wouldn't have known it. There were grocer's shops with their sacks of beans and other products, and price tags stuck into them. Everything in those days came from somewhere. Rice came from Patna. Tea came from the then Ceylon. Bacon came from Ayrshire or Wiltshire. Beef came from Angus. (It was marked Angus Beef.)

Lamb and mutton came from Wales or Scotland when it didn't come from New Zealand.

Sometimes butter came from New Zealand, but mainly from nearby Dumfries.

Cream came from Ayrshire, Cornwall, or Devon.

Cheese came from Cheddar. I remember no other in my preschool days. Later we had Gorgonzola all the way from Gorgonzola.

Fish came from the North Sea or (for the best herring) Loch Fyne. Besides herring, there were mackerel, John Dories, haddock, halibut, turbot, plaice, flounder, and sole.

"Caller herrin' " meant fresh herring. The popular ballad went:

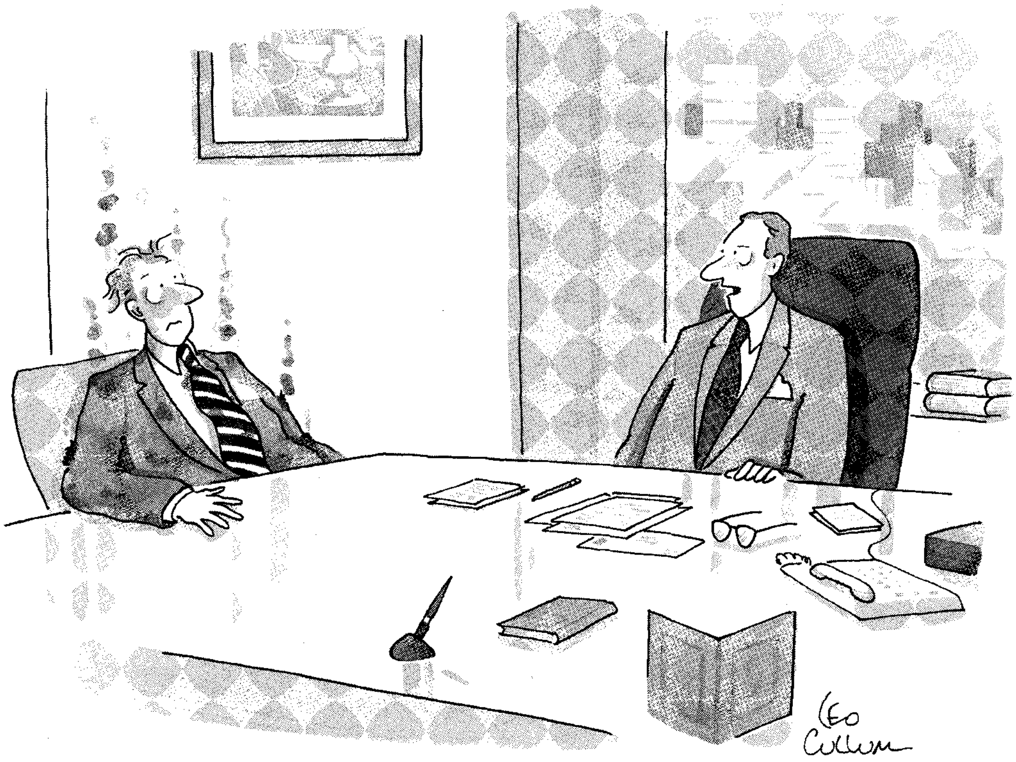
Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
They're bonny fish and halesome farin'.
Wha'll buy my caller herrin'?
New drawn frae the Forth.

Cotton came from India or Egypt. Silk came from Milan and Lyons. Lisle thread (for our stockings and summer underwear) came from Lille (formerly Lisle), in France.

Straw hats came from Leghorn or Panama.

Money was pounds (paper notes) or, equally, sovereigns (gold), silver half crowns (eight to the pound), silver florins (ten to the pound), silver shillings (twenty made one pound), sixpenny bits (silver, half a shilling), tiny silver threepenny bits (half a sixpence), bronze pennies (known as "coppers," twelve to the shilling), and, of the same alloy, halfpennies (pronounced "hayp'nies," half a penny), and farthings (half a halfpenny). There were also genteel guineas, but there were no notes or coins for these; a guinea merely meant one pound plus one shilling. Doctors sent in their bills in guineas, as did furriers and high-class dressmakers and hatters. The best clothes shops marked their wares in guineas, but children's clothes were in pounds, shillings, and pence, as were food and railway tickets.

I remember a local furrier, Mrs. Forrest, a large-bosomed lady, had been altering a fur cape of my mother's for a price that my parents took to be five pounds but that the furrier insisted was guineas. Mrs. Forrest sat in the bow window of our sitting room, having delivered the restructured cape; she was silhouetted against the light, repeating, "No, not five pounds, five guineas. I said *five*. We furriers always mean guineas. I said *five*." I remember my father forking out the extra five shillings in question; and always afterward my parents referred to Mrs. Forrest as I Said Five. They loved to repeat the phrase after each other. I Said Five lived and worked opposite our house, so we saw her frequently from the window. "Good afternoon, Mrs. Forrest," my mother would say, passing her in



"Every aggressive, controversial firm needs a lightning rod, Garvey."

the street. But later she would tell my father, "I saw I Said Five."

NEIGHBORS

MEETING people in the street meant that you stopped and talked or you said something about the weather and went on. If the weather was good, the amiable comment was "Good morning, Mrs. X. Fine day." If it was raining, blowing hard from the north, or snowing, the words in passing were "Good morning, Mrs. X. Seasonable weather." First names were never used. Among the older Edinburgh women it was not unusual to address a married lady as Mistress X instead of Mrs. X. All during the thirties a very elderly and well-educated friend, Mrs. Hardie, called my mother Mistress Camberg.

On the ground floor of the block of flats next to ours was a jeweller's shop, the back premises of which were occupied by the owners, the Page family. On Sunday mornings Mr. Page used to go to the Mound, which is the panoramic Hyde Park Corner of Edinburgh, there to set up his box and preach the Bible, or about the Bible. What his message was I do not know. On Sunday afternoons, his duty fulfilled, red-haired Mr. Page would set off with his motorbike and sidecar to the country. His red-haired son James, still a schoolboy, rode on the pillion, while Mrs. Page sat in the sidecar with their small daughter, Isabel, on her knee. My brother and I were both redheads, and so I considered it right that there should be some red-haired neighbors.

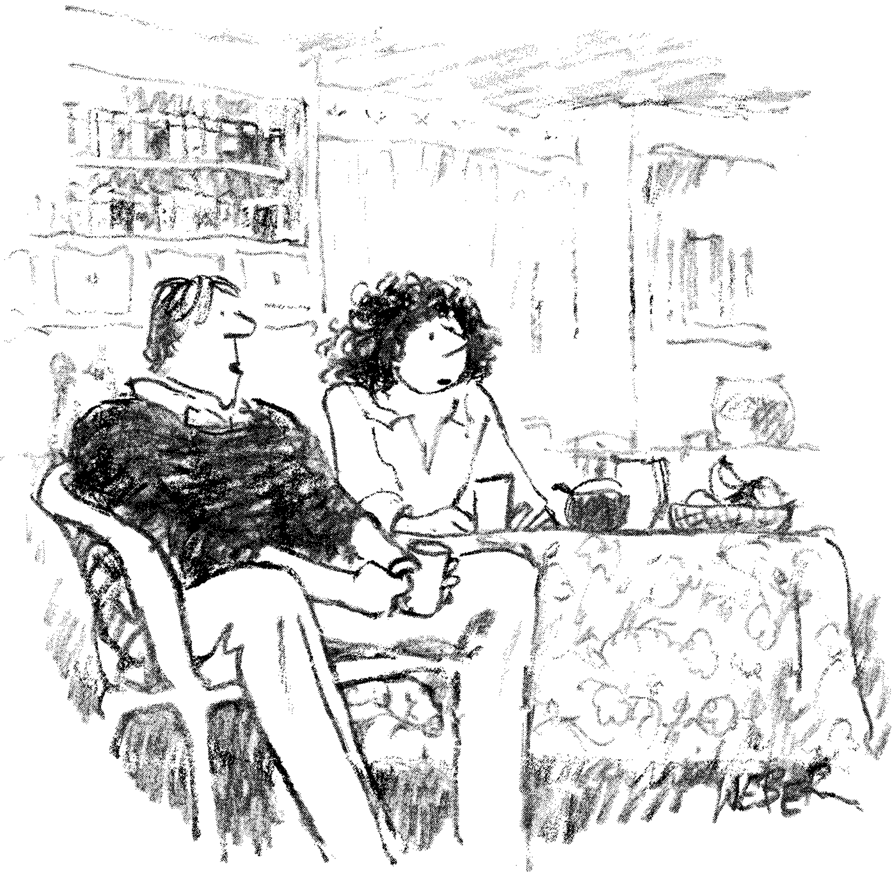
Isabel was exactly my age, and my first playmate. The back windows of our flats looked out on a pretty stretch of green that formed a large grassy courtyard within four sides of a street block. And there we could play safely under the watchful glances of our mothers from their respective windows. Isabel and I played with our dolls, pitched a rudimentary tent, or embarked on digging a hole to Australia until it was time to be called in to tea. Scottish summer days are long. The weather cannot always have been good enough for us to play outside, but when we did the sunlight went on forever. On miraculous days Mrs. Kerr, our upstairs neighbor, would open her window at about three in the afternoon and let down a picnic in a basket. I don't remember what exactly this picnic consisted of, except that we were always delighted with it and ate it all up.

Mrs. Kerr was a good deal older than my mother. Her daughter, Maudie, was already in her twenties, training to be a singer. She had a job in the Civil Service, but a career as a singer was her ambition, testified to night after night from the flat above. We never complained, even among ourselves. It was accepted that Maudie was in a destined category. Mrs. Kerr told us about Maudie's training in legendary tones meant to impress us. Maudie was to sing in a concert: "Of course she has to eat liver for her voice." Great bouquets of flowers were ordered, so that they should be handed up to blond, blue-eyed Maudie on the stage. "They all do it," said Mrs. Kerr. "All singers get their own bouquets sent up to them on the stage."

It was Mrs. Kerr who taught my mother to make soup. "Three brees to a bane," said Mrs. Kerr, which sounded shivery and poetic to me, like a line from a Border ballad. But I quickly realized what she meant: you got three brews out of every bone.

Our next-door neighbor, poor bedridden Miss Peggy Moffat, who was arthritic and had once been a painter, spoke plain English with a Scottish accent, but her housekeeper, Miss Draper, a wiry and scornful soothsayer, spoke much of the dialect; when I won a prize at school, Miss Draper's disconcerting comment was "The De'il aye kens his ain," which I well knew to mean "The Devil always knows his own." I would have been horrified if Miss Moffat herself had said anything like this, but as it was only Miss Draper being her true self, I bore no resentment at all. One of Peggy Moffat's oil paintings, of a glade in the botanical gardens, adorned our walls. That she would never wield a brush again had been her destiny before I was born. I liked to go to visit her and stand by her high bed, which I could just see over the side of.

Downstairs, next door on the right, was Miss Morrison's sweet shop,



"O.K., the question is, how can we improve our relationship without spending more money."

• •

where she stood with tall authority, her side of the counter having been built up higher than the customer's side. If you went there without your mother to buy a pennyworth of chocolate drops, of Licorice All-Sorts, or a ha'pennyworth of Hundreds and Thousands (minute multicolored balls), or a swirling barley stick, Miss Morrison would inquire closely as to where you got that penny or that ha'penny, who gave it to you; and she would further interrogate you as to whether your mother knew you were spending those coins, held between your fingers, on sweeties. Only after satisfying herself on these and other deeply moral points would she take down the sweetie jar and weigh out the just portion; and even then she cautioned us to go straight home with our purchase and not eat it all up out there in the street. It was generally considered ill-mannered for parents to give money to young children to spend willy-nilly.

On the left was a large shoe shop, Lauders', now a Chinese restaurant. We never bought our shoes at Lauders', but I remember a pale daughter, a girl of about fifteen, very thin, green and gray, who stood by the window looking out. William Todd, the grocer, was at the end of the block, as it turns into Viewforth. He was important, because he had a license to sell wines. Gilbey's port, four shillings and sixpence a bottle, was the great favorite with my mother; she sipped it throughout the day: "my tonic." Mr. Todd gave a penny back on each empty bottle. And round the corner from Todd's was the home of the two ladies to whom my brother and I were sent to learn to play the piano, for although my mother had been a music teacher she didn't feel equal to teaching her own children. Among all the names of my infancy, those two sisters' are among the very few that escape me. I know their house had a funny smell and that one of them had a stocking always twisted. My brother attended assiduously to his piano lessons. I much preferred to play with the parrot, which fascinated me, both at the time and later, in my thoughts.

In the next block, in Bruntsfield Place, was William Christie's butcher shop, where gruesome carcasses of animals hung on hooks, the floor covered with sawdust, and where jellied meats were displayed in the window under fearful names like "potted head." But Bill Christie was a sweet man.

YELLOW FLOWERS

Pie-wedge petals
deeply pinked and
the yellow of yellow oranges,
set in a single
layer, ray out
from a pollen-shedding tuft:
see the bright dust
on this filing cabinet
enamelled the greeny-cream
of the seed-cradling inner flesh
of an avocado

these yellow flowers
on wiry stems, bunched
in a thick gray pitcher:
two bands of washed-out blue,
two transfers in same ("You
don't want
that clunky thing")

and petals fall and tufts
puff up, a brown fuzz ball
with a green frill: the hard
green balls with green frills
of course are buds: and

you plunge your face
in their massed
papery powdery sweetness
and grunt in delight
at their sunset sweetness

it begins with "C"

yes: coreopsis

—James Schuyler

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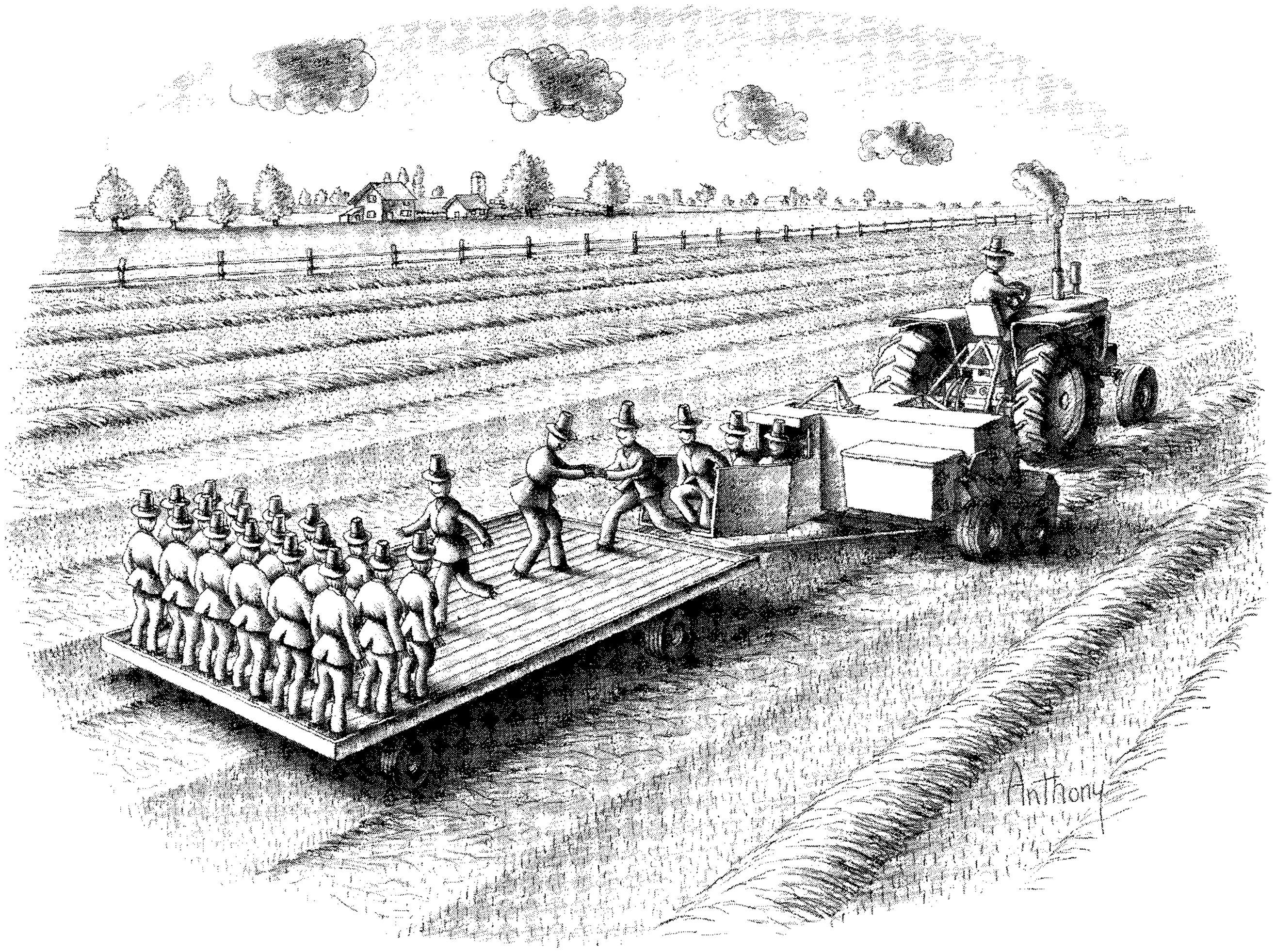
The main feature of interest in the large draper's shop on the opposite side of the street was a system of overhead pneumatic tubes that carried containers of money from the customer, via the assistant, to the counting house and sent back the change. The shop assistant wrapped our money in the invoice and packed it into an egg-shaped receptacle that she pulled down from a wire dangling above her head. This would then shoot up and away. On its return a bell would ring and the assistant would reach up and pull down our change wrapped in its wooden cocoon.

Next door to this draper's shop was glamorous Rudolph the hairdresser, with a model bust of a beautiful, blushing lady in the window, her short hair waved incredibly.

Just round the corner in Viewforth lived Nita McEwen, who resembled me very much. She was already in her first year at James Gillespie's School when I saw her with her parents, walking between them, holding their hands. I was doing the same thing. I was not yet at school. It must have been a Saturday or Sunday, when children used to walk with their parents. My mother remarked how like me the little girl was; one of her parents must have said the same to her. I looked round at the child and saw she was looking round at me. Either her likeness to me or something else made me feel strange. Later, at school, although Nita was in a higher class and we never played together, our physical resemblance was often remarked upon. Her hair was slightly redder than mine. Years later, when I was twenty-one, I was to meet Nita McEwen in a boarding house in the then Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. There our likeness to each other was greatly remarked on. One night, Nita was shot dead by her husband, who then shot himself. I heard a scream, followed by two shots. That was the factual origin of my short story "Bang-Bang You're Dead."

MYTHS AND IMAGES

SOMETIMES I would be out with my parents when darkness fell, probably on a Saturday, when my father didn't go to work. In winter it was dark between three and four in the afternoon. We came home by tramcar,



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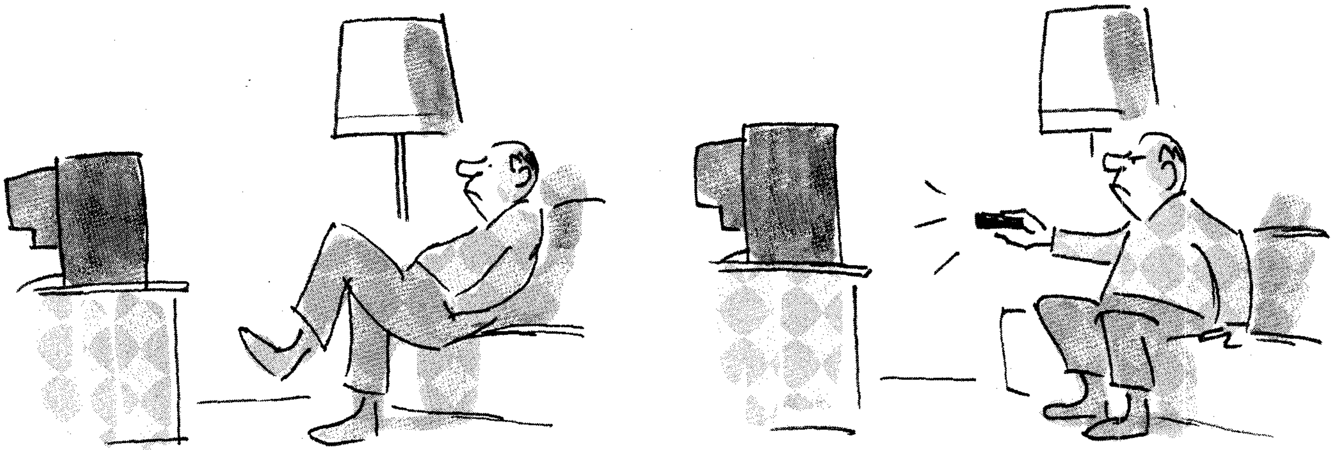
from whose windows I could see the lights of the city making patterns in the distance. If we were walking I might get tired, and my father would carry me the last part of the way home; then the lights of the city bobbed up and down against the dark-blue sky.

Electricity had come to the principal streets of Edinburgh long before I was born, but in our Bruntsfield Place the street lamps were still lit by gas. We had progressed from the days of Robert Louis Stevenson's lamplighter ("With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street"); our gas lamps had pilot lights, so that the lamplighter who passed by at dusk came posting with a long pole in his hand, with which he deftly turned on the lamplight. Like Stevenson, I used to wait at the window to witness this performance.

My preschool dresses were not made of stuff like other children's. They were knitted in silk and wool by my mother and Auntie Gertie in a variety of colors, among which I remember royal blue, bronze, and old gold. My simple white silk knitted dress for parties had a featherstitch. Many small girls at parties had ballerina-type dresses. The small boys generally wore kilts. We all carried our party shoes in a special bag and changed into them inside the house, something that I do to this day. To make my house shoes more partified my mother would mold a rosette of pink sealing wax on the front of each one. Parties were for Christmas or birthdays. Christmas was largely a children's feast in the Scotland of those days. Many shops, offices, and factories remained open at Christmas Day; the great day was New Year's. Friends would come first-footing (which meant being the first visitor of the year) shortly after midnight on Hogmanay (New Year's Eve)—a dark man taking precedence, for luck.

One party I remember was at the house of my school friend of many years Frances Niven. We were still quite tiny. I came to love this house, at Howard Place, adjoining the house where Robert Louis Stevenson was born. At the party of my memory, the children, about twenty of us, were settled at a long table in the large, festively decorated pantry next to the kitchen. We were given some kind of orange mousse, served prettily in half-orange skins, and we ate this with teaspoons. Frances's mother and aunt, and some other elders, were hovering around. One of them said, "Look at them tucking in!" I seemed to be the only child who heard this, and although I didn't make any fuss, I was ridiculously affected. I thought it a terrible thing to say, and I put down my spoon, unable to finish my delicious orange sweet.

My mother used to come and collect me when it was time to go home. Her black hair had been cut short by Rudolph, and she wore powder and paint, as makeup was called. The powder was Coty's, shade Rachel. The paint was



carmine, a red powder bought from the chemist in very small quantities; it nestled in the fold of a piece of white paper, and it cost tuppence. My own hair must have been cut about that time, when many small girls had short hair, for I remember people saying to me, "Where are your curls?"

What images return! My father made rings with his cigarette smoke, he made the shadow of Queen Victoria in profile on the wall, and rabbits out of table napkins. I learned to tell the time from his pocket watch.

"Coal!" would come the cry from the streets every morning, and when we needed coal the coal man's horse would bring his cart to a clicking stop at my mother's bidding from the window. Then up the stairs would tramp the coal-black man with his hundredweights to tip them into our coal cellar, which was built into the flat. How heavy the word "hundredweight" sounded. Each sack cost half a crown. We used coal to heat the water and to burn in the fireplaces. More than once, our chimney caught fire and my father had to go and pay a fine. Sometimes the chimney sweeps, sootier even than the coal man, would come and clean the flues. This was done partly inside the house and partly on the roof. Two men were involved, calling up to each other an eerie "Ooh-whoo."

"Rags, bottles, or bones! Any old rags?" was another street cry that came wafting up to our windows. Why did he want to buy bones, I wondered, and still wonder. What bones, I thought. *Whose* bones? The rag man had no horse. He pushed his cart by hand, and on it were piled old cartons, old pieces of furniture, kettles, tins.

My mother was full of superstitions and presentiments. She wouldn't wear green. But I knew that this was mad from the evidence of perfectly happy people I saw wearing green. Her terror of thunder and lightning likewise had no effect on me. She would huddle with me in a darkened room during a thunderstorm, but as soon as I got away on holiday to the seaside at Crail in Fife I ran down to the wonderful beach to watch thunderstorms in progress over the North Sea.

For my mother, shoes on a table were bad luck. But who would put shoes on a table? Crossed cutlery was a bad omen. My mother turned over the money in her purse when she saw the new moon and bowed three times to it, no matter who was watching her. (I still do this myself. True, I do it for fun; but all the same I do it.) She and her mother were fond of quoting maxims. My grandmother:

A whistling woman, a crowing hen
Is neither fit for God nor man.

My mother (rousing herself to action): "This won't pay the old woman her ninepence"; "Laugh before seven, cry before eleven"; and (burdensome forewarning to me) "A son's a son till he gets a wife, but a daughter's a daughter all her life."

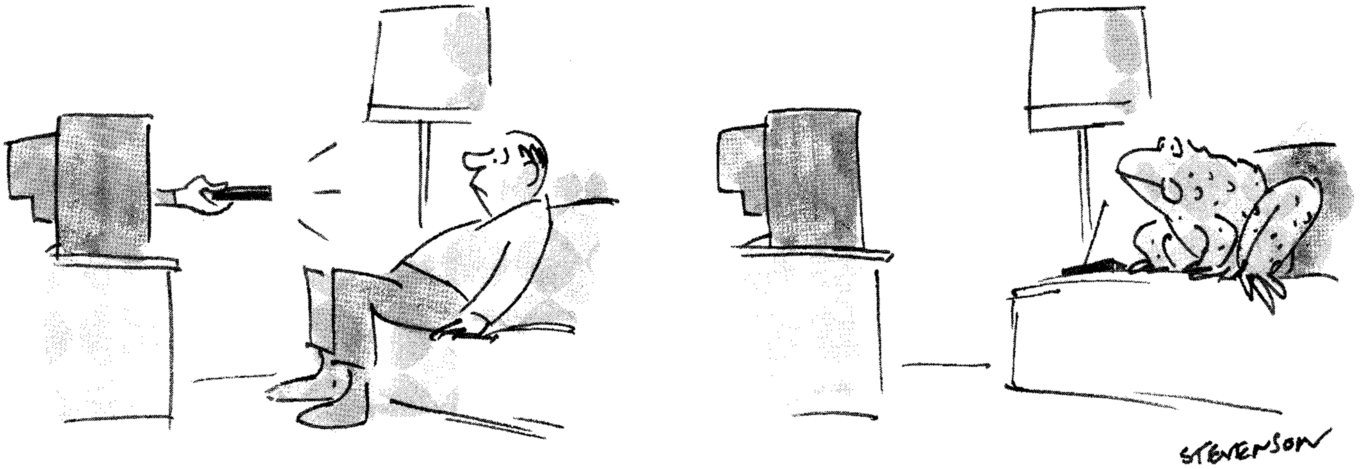
There was also the often repeated "The eyes are the windows of the soul." (She herself had lovely large brown eyes.)

My father's sayings were more humorous and savored of the music hall. If there was a lull in the conversation he might say, "If this weather continues, we'll have no change." And setting forth for a walk: "Take my arm and call me Lucy." There was also a mysterious person named by my father Mr. Poomschtok, whose chief characteristic was that he didn't exist, so that a great many happenings could be attributed to him. My father also performed a strange dance to the tune of "In a Persian Market." He did another country-type dance, holding in his fingers the knees of his trousers as if they were a skirt.

When he took my mother to a dance, he wore an evening suit with a white scarf and kid gloves, which, I was told, he kept on while dancing, as was the custom. My mother went out in a white beaded dress with an uneven hem, which made her square in shape but was greatly approved of by Auntie Gertie.

I was woken in the middle of the night and taken to the window to see the fireworks in the back greens. "It's 1922!" my mother said. I was given some warm port wine.

I had measles and saw my face in the mirror, all red freckles. Dr. Thatcher arrived in his black frock coat, or morning coat, as it was sometimes called, his striped trousers, and his top hat, which he placed upside down on the bed, while my mother stood aside, more concerned about the clean towel and basin of water for the doctor to wash his hands than she was about me. The tramcars rattled past while Dr. Thatcher bade me say "Ah," and frowned against their noise. Dr. Thatcher knew about my mother's much-vaunted nervous breakdown, which she had had some years before I was born. She still boasted a nervous condition, insofar as she couldn't be left in the house quite alone; she was afraid. But she could go out alone. I took this robustly for granted; it was part of life.



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Legends and stories of that time before I was born were also enfolded into the passing of the day. My father, the youngest of eleven, had run away to sea at the age of fourteen. He reached Kirkwall, in the Orkneys, very seasick, and was put ashore at the local police station, where his father came from Edinburgh to recover him. There was the story of his engagement to my mother long ago—it must have been 1909—and of how the engagement was at one time broken off at the insistence of my mother's Aunt Sarah, this worthy woman having learned that my father had given my mother a pair of gloves. It was regarded with blank horror for a man to present an unmarried girl with what was termed an item of apparel. It was the end of the world.

I never knew my paternal grandparents, who were known to their family as Pa and poor Ma. It was said that poor Ma could sit on her hair and that she sat reading the Bible by the window all day. I imagined her doing both at the same time.

THE DOORBELL

THAT ring at the door that I loved so much would bring, in the afternoon, my mother's friends or, on rare occasions, my married aunts. In the evening a much more exciting variety of family friends rang the bell, many of them fairly eccentric, in whom I took a deep interest. A pulley on the landing—or doorlifter, as we called it—would open the street door for visitors who pulled that wonderful doorbell. The magic pulley on the landing would often admit a voice first of all, calling up the stairs, for there was a curve in the staircase and one could not see immediately who the caller was. Then onstage to us, as it seemed, came one of the following:

Miss Pride, her small face covered with tiny red veins, in a neat brown coat and hat, fawn gloves, and fawn wool stockings. What she had to do with my parents, what was the basis of their friendship, I can't think. She was neither of the race of Auntie Gertie, who practiced the Charleston with my mother on the kitchen waxcloth (as floor covering was then generally called in Edinburgh), nor was she of the class of tall, fair, gentle Fanny Pagan, then wife of a bus driver, who used to come and give my mother a hand in scrubbing floors.

There was Miss Macdonald, whose name was Margaret, as I gathered from a piece of conversation she reported. Miss Macdonald was dressed in navy blue with a white blouse. She was finer-bred than Miss Pride, but it was said she was not all there. I think my parents were sorry for her. All the time she spoke, tears coursed down her cheeks. They trickled down into her cup of tea. She couldn't ever stop crying. She was bound up in a court case against someone who had wrongly accused her. Her brother, a lawyer, couldn't do much more than he had already done. The word "like" peppered her conversation. "My brother, like, wouldn't go, like, any further with it, like . . ."

Bella Myers, large-hipped and full of cheer, was much less of a puzzle, and a much closer friend. Nobody understood why she hadn't married, except that she was less beautiful than her married sister, Gertie Rosenbloom. She brought stories of her office life, she discussed music, she gossiped wildly about people. She reported office puns, such as "Many are cauld"—Scottish for "cold"—"but few are chosen," the heating in her place of work having broken down. Bella Myers hardly noticed my presence, which to me was all to the good.

Another of the random and varied characters that the doorbell brought was a Bavarian fräulein whose name I can't remember. She was tubby and had a large round face with reddish-gold hair drawn back in a bun. I am not clear what she was doing in Edinburgh, but I think she was a private nurse. How did my parents know her? Later in the thirties this lady disappeared; my mother supposed she had been "called back" to Germany by Hitler. The same applied to a young philosopher, also reddish in coloring, who sometimes frequented our house. He went for walking tours. Mr. Anchutz was his name. He had nothing to do with the Bavarian woman; their visits never coincided. He spent a great deal of time urging my parents to vote Labour. But, more understandably, since he was a university man, he, too, went back. And I wonder, indeed, what happened to him.

Mary Wright was an afternoon crony of my mother's, flighty, powdered and painted and fox-furred. She was the mother of Billy, who, with my brother, dressed me up as a boy and plastered back my hair with water, so that I caught a cold. The Pattersons, with their schoolgirl daughters—Doris, especially dear to my mother, and Constance—were most glamorous of all. There was a son, Atholl, a grown schoolboy on whom I took a shine, and whom I would follow everywhere. I remember following him over stretch upon stretch of grass, and picking up windfall apples; I suppose this was in the Pattersons' garden.

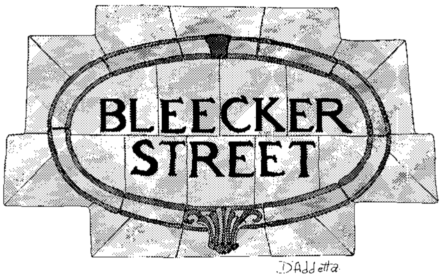
THE ROYAL VISIT

I LEARNED that children could be born out of wedlock, and I gathered this information in a very simple way. The King (George V) and Queen Mary came on an official visit to Edinburgh. For this animated occasion our friend Mrs. Hardie (or, as she preferred, Mistress Hardie), who was then an active ninety, had obtained seats on the balcony of a smart shop in Princes Street. I sat between Mrs. Hardie and my mother. We were right in the front. Flags were flying everywhere, all up Princes Street. Mrs. Hardie sat very erect, as was her wont. It was a lovely sunny day. The royal entrance began: Carriages, horses, plumes bobbing up and down. Kilts, bagpipes. The first carriage, flanked in state by cavalry, contained a gentleman with a cocked hat, uniform, and a pointed beard. "The police escort," murmured my mother. "Chief Constable Ross." At this, Mrs. Hardie leaned across me and touched my mother's arm. "That's King Edward's bairn," she said. As is common with adults, she didn't think for a moment that a child would understand her. I didn't quite understand at first, although I knew that King Edward had been the present King's father. Then came the enlightenment: The next carriage contained a gentleman almost the twin image of Chief Constable Ross. With his plumed hat, gleaming uniform, and pointed beard, he would have been the Chief Constable all over again, except that, with pink-and-white Queen Mary, wearing her usual toque, at his side, and his arm raised in salutes and greetings, he was obviously King George V, another of King Edward's bairns. I put two and two together, full of wonder, while Mrs. Hardie proceeded to explain to my mother that Queen Mary's beautiful complexion was "all enamel."

1923

WE tended to pay and return visits to our relations when they were expected. When my aunts Rae and Esther did call unexpectedly it was always in the late afternoon, and they always put my mother in a flap. Rae was a fresh-air fiend and insisted on my mother's throwing open all the windows, complaining that our house was stuffy. Auntie Rae was a Francophile; the best compliment she could pay was "very *French*." Esther, the eldest of my father's family, was a practicing, if not absolutely Orthodox, Jew, and my mother was always anxious to hide from Esther evidence of ham, bacon, pork sausages, or any other unholy delicacy that she had in mind to prepare for our high tea when my father and Gertie should come home from their work. But Auntie Esther took a keen interest in my reading and writing, and I loved her for that. I remember her best at a time when I was wearing my dark-red (we called it maroon) school blazer and could show her my first schoolbooks.

In the summer of 1923 I already had my new schoolbooks, ready to start school in September. Nelson's Infant Primer, bought at Thin's, in Chamber's Street, was my first reading book. I read it avidly all summer and still have a vivid impression of the pastoral illustrations (for nobody in those storybooks lived in a city). My brother, now on his school holidays, was making a model of the Forth Bridge with his Meccano set; it was augmented by various spare parts that my father brought home from his workplace, having made them specially with his own hands. Those summer evenings of Edinburgh go on till ten at night, and I would see from the window the golfers returning with their golf cliques (as we called clubs) in their hands from their round of golf on the Bruntsfield Links, where my school-to-be was situated. My brother also played golf; I was promised a putter for next year. My mother lingered at the piano on the long summer evenings. I had a pencil case and some new-smelling notebooks to go with my Infant Primer. I had outdoor shoes with laces to tie, as well as my normal house shoes, with a strap to button up with a buttonhook. I had a black velours hat with a red-and-yellow band and a JGS monogrammed badge on it. The yellow JGS stood for James Gillespie's School. On my maroon blazer pocket was another badge, a rampant yellow unicorn surmounting the school motto: "*Fidelis et Fortis*." My parents had informed themselves that this meant "Faithful and Strong." How clever we all were!



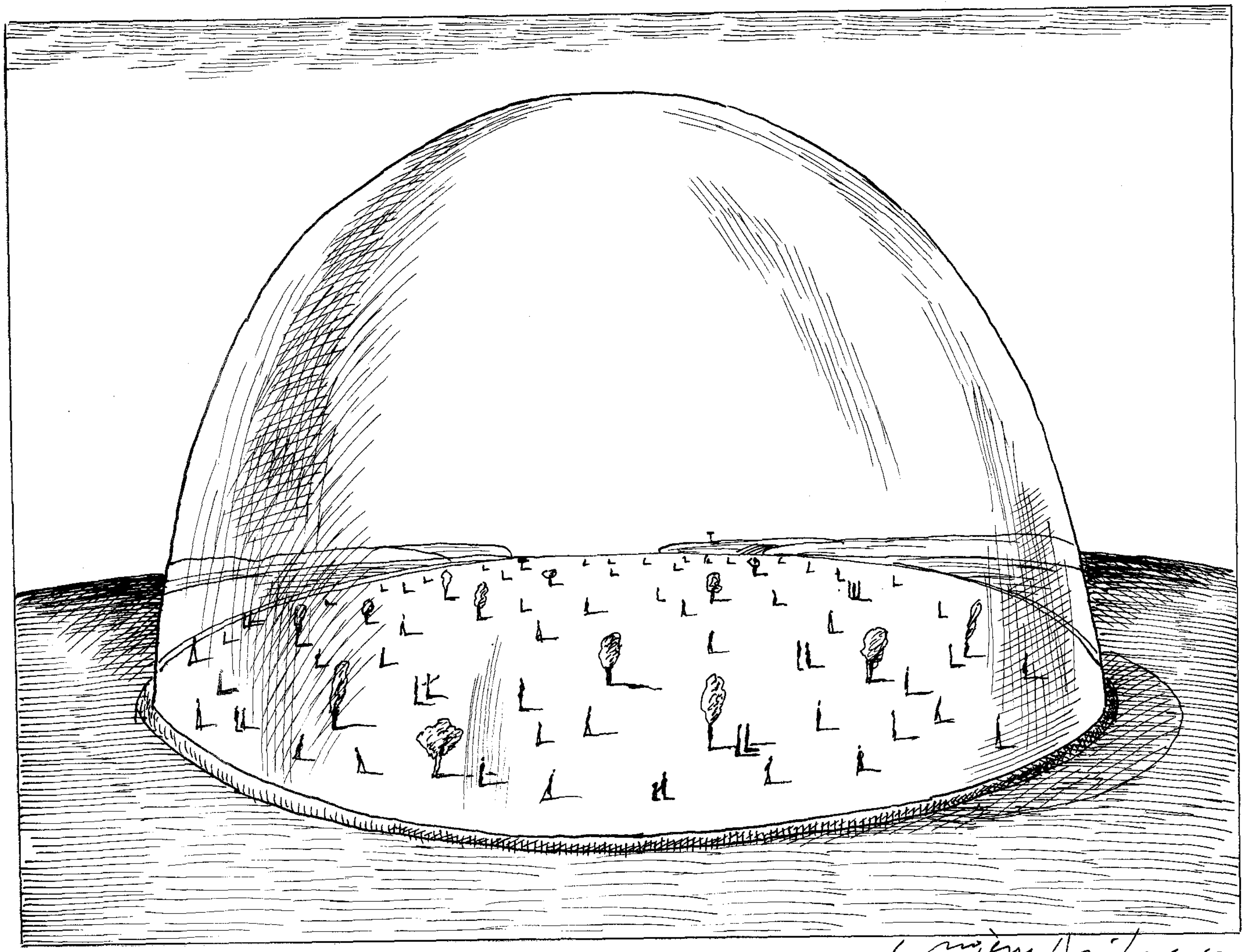
I don't know at what point before I went to school I became aware of poor men or women, sometimes accompanied by children, singing for pennies in the back green. When my mother told me they were hungry, I looked out at them with tears. Usually my mother wrapped up a penny in a piece of newspaper and threw it out, as did a few others among our neighbors. No one remarked on the quality of the performance, the singing itself; it would have seemed irrelevant. This was part of the distress following the First World War. The men who had returned could not find work, and the social services were inadequate. I once saw a child of about seven selling newspapers at Toll Cross without so much as a vest underneath the thin jacket of his coat. He was barefoot. My mother was dismayed. Such children were mostly destined to die of tuberculosis. It was said, I think truly, that their parents drank every penny they could lay hands on, including their children's gains. Children clustered outside the smelly public houses as we passed, waiting for their elders. I was not exposed to many of these sights, but certainly before I went to school I was conscious that others suffered. Poor as we certainly were, there were others greatly poorer than we, positively in want, and I, in the safety of holding my parents' hands, saw it.

Sometimes I compare my early infancy with that of my friends whose very early lives were in the hands of nannies, who were surrounded by servants and privilege. Those preschool lives seem nothing like so abundant as mine was, nothing like so crammed with people and with amazing information. I was not set aside from adult social life, nor cozied up in a nursery, and taken for nice regular walks far from the madding crowd. I was witness to the whole passing scene. Perhaps no other life could ever be as rich as that first life, when, five years old, prepared and briefed to my full capacity, I was ready for school.

—MURIEL SPARK

REFLECTIONS

THE END OF NATURE



NATURE, we believe, takes forever. It moves with infinite slowness through the many periods of its history, whose names we can dimly recall from high-school biology—the Cambrian, the Devonian, the Triassic, the Cretaceous, the Pleistocene. At least since Darwin, nature writers have taken pains to stress the incomprehensible length of this path. "So slowly, oh, so slowly, have the great changes been brought about," John Burroughs wrote in 1912. "The Orientals try to get a hint of eternity by saying that when the Himalayas have been ground to powder by allowing a gauze veil to float against them once in a thousand years, eternity will only have just begun. Our mountains have been pulverized by a process almost as slow." We have been told that man's tenure is as a minute to the earth's day, but it is that vast day that has lodged in our minds. The age of the trilobites began six hundred million years ago. The dinosaurs lived for a hundred and fifty million years. Since even a million years is utterly unfathomable, the message is: Nothing happens quickly. Change takes unimaginable—"geologic"—time.

This idea about time is essentially misleading, for the world as we know it, the world with human beings formed into some sort of civilization, is of quite comprehensible duration. People began to collect in a rudimentary society in the north of Mesopotamia some twelve thousand years ago. Using twenty-five years as a generation, that is four hundred and eighty generations ago. Sitting here at my desk, I can think back five generations—I have photographs of four. That is, I can think back one-ninety-sixth of the way to the start of civilization. A skilled genealogist could easily get me one-fiftieth of the distance back. And I can conceive of how most of those forebears lived. From the work of archeologists and from accounts like those in the Bible I have some sense of daily life at least as far back as the time of the Pharaohs, which is almost half the way. Three hundred and twenty generations ago, Jericho was a walled city of three thousand souls. Three hundred and twenty is a large number, but not in the way that six hundred million is a large number, not inscrutably large. And within those twelve thousand years of civilization time is not uniform. The world as we really know it dates back to the Renaissance. The world as we *really* know it dates back to the Industrial Revolution. The world

RAISIN SURPRISE
MILK
Victoria Roberts

"And what, pray tell, is the ratio of flake to raisin this morning?"

• •

as we feel comfortable in it dates back to perhaps 1945.

In other words, our sense of an unlimited future, which is drawn from that apparently bottomless well of the past, is a delusion. True, evolution, grinding on ever so slowly, has taken billions of years to create us from slime, but that does not mean that time always moves so ponderously. Over a lifetime or a decade or a year, big and impersonal and dramatic changes can take place. We have accepted the idea that continents can drift in the course of aeons, or that continents can die in a nuclear second. But normal time seems to us immune from such huge changes. It isn't, though. In the last three decades, for example, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has increased more than ten per cent, from about three hundred and fifteen parts per million to about three hundred and fifty parts per million. In the last decade, an immense "hole" in the ozone layer has opened up above the South Pole each fall, and, according to the Worldwatch Institute, the percentage of West German forests damaged by acid rain has risen from less than ten per cent to more than fifty per cent. Last year, for perhaps the first time since that starved Pilgrim winter at Plymouth, America consumed more grain than it grew. Burroughs again: "One summer day, while I was walking along the country road on the farm where I was born, a section of the stone wall opposite me, and not more than three or four yards distant, suddenly fell down. Amid the general stillness and immobility about me, the effect was quite startling. . . . It was the sudden summing-up of half a century or more of atomic changes in the material of the wall. A grain or two of sand yielded to the pressure of long years, and gravity did the rest."

In much the same comforting way that we think of time as imponderably long, we consider the earth to be inconceivably large. Although with the advent of space flight it became fashionable to picture the planet as a small orb of life and light in a dark, cold void, that image never really took hold. To any one of us, the earth is enormous, "infinite to our senses." Or, at least, it is if we think about it in the usual horizontal dimensions. There is a huge distance between my house, in the Adirondack Mountains, and Manhattan—it's a five-hour drive through one state in one country of one continent. But from my house to Allen Hill, near town, is a trip of five and a half miles. By bicycle it takes about twenty minutes, by car seven or eight. I've walked it in an hour and a half. If you turned that trip on its end, the twenty-minute pedal past Bateman's sandpit and the graveyard and the waterfall would take me to the height of Mt. Everest—almost precisely to the point where the air is too thin to breathe without artificial assistance. Into that tight space, and the layer of ozone above it, are crammed all that is life and all that maintains life.

This, I realize, is a far from novel observation. I repeat it only to make the case I made with regard to time. The world is not as large as we intuitively believe—space can be as short as time. For instance, the average American car driven the average American distance—ten thousand miles—in an average American year releases its own weight in carbon into the atmosphere. Imagine every car on a busy freeway pumping a ton of carbon into the atmosphere, and the sky seems less infinitely blue.

Along with our optimistic perceptions of time and space, other, relatively minor misunderstandings distort our sense of the world. Consider the American failure to convert to the metric system. Like all schoolchildren of my vintage, I spent many days listening to teachers explain litres and metres and hectares and all the other logical units of measurement, and then promptly forgot about it. All of us did, except the scientists, who always use such units. As a result, if I read that there will be a rise of 0.8 degrees Celsius in the temperature between now and the year 2000, it sounds less ominous than a rise of a degree and a half Fahrenheit. Similarly, a ninety-centimetre rise in sea level sounds less ominous than a one-yard rise—and neither of them sounds all that ominous until one stops to think that over a beach with a normal slope such a rise would bring the ocean ninety metres (that's two hundred and ninety-five feet) above its current tideline. In somewhat the same way, the logarith-

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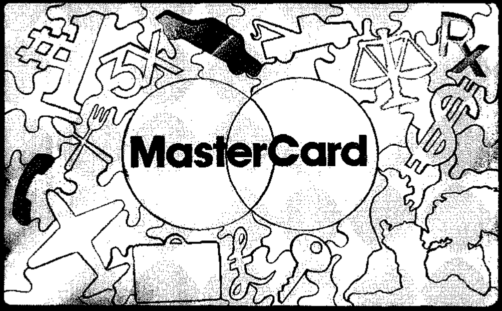

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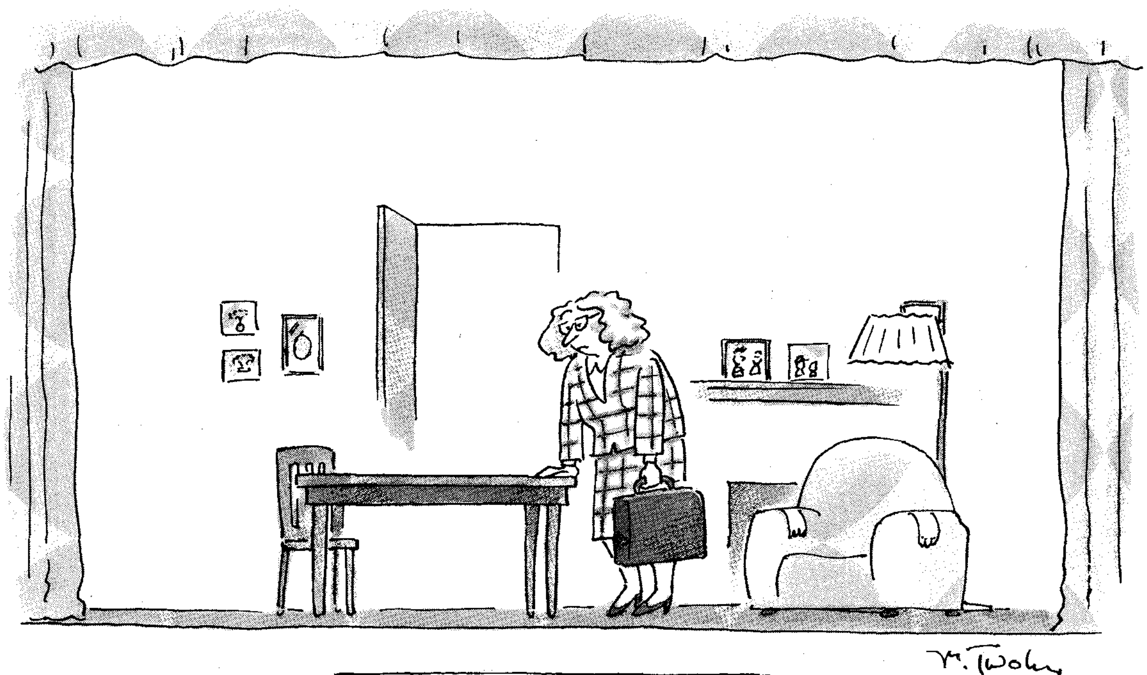


DEATH OF A SALESPERSON

mic scale we use to determine the acidity or alkalinity of our soils and our waters—pH—distorts reality for anyone who doesn't use it on a daily basis. Normal rainwater has a pH of 5.6. But the acidified rain that falls on Buck Hill, behind my house, has a pH of 4.6 to 4.2, which is from ten to fourteen times as acid as normal.

Of all such quirks, though, probably the most significant is an accident of the calendar: we live too close to the year 2000. Forever we have read about the year *2000*. It has become a symbol of the bright and distant future, when we will ride in air cars and talk on video phones. The year 2010 still sounds far off, almost unreachably far off, as if it were on the other side of a great body of water. But 2010 is as close as 1970—as close as the breakup of the Beatles—and the turn of the century is no farther in front of us than Ronald Reagan's election to the Presidency is behind. We live in the shadow of a number, and that makes it hard to see the future.

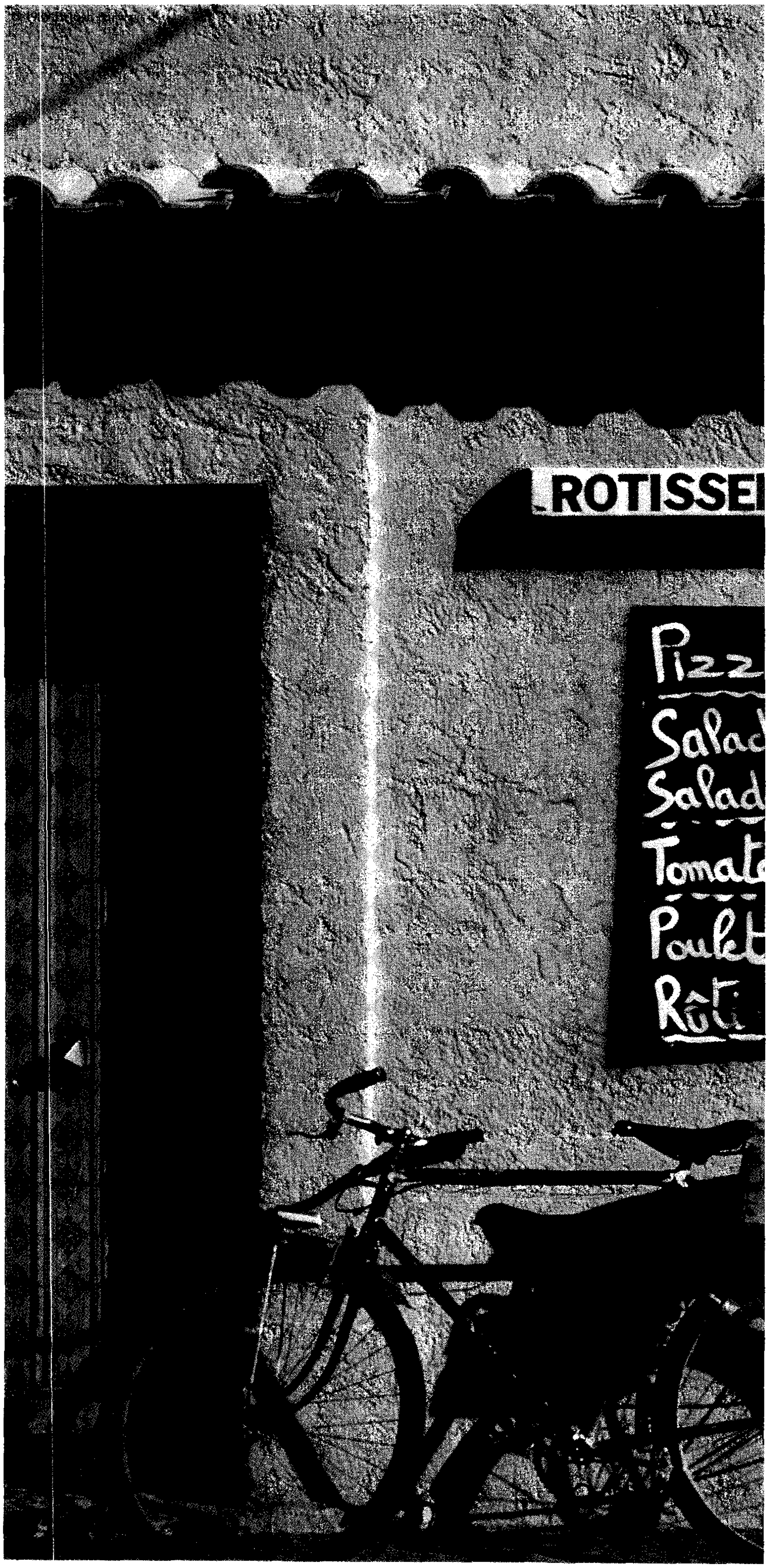
Our comforting sense, then, of the permanence of our natural world—our confidence that it will change gradually and imperceptibly, if at all—is the result of a subtly warped perspective. Changes in our world which can affect us can happen in our lifetime—not just changes like wars but bigger and more sweeping events. Without recognizing it, we have already stepped over the threshold of such a change. I believe that we are at the end of nature.

By this I do not mean the end of the world. The rain will still fall, and the sun will still shine. When I say "nature," I mean a certain set of human ideas about the world and our place in it. But the death of these ideas begins with concrete changes in the reality around us, changes that scientists can measure. More and more frequently, these changes will clash with our perceptions, until our sense of nature as eternal and separate is finally washed away and we see all too clearly what we have done.

SVANTE ARRHENIUS took his doctorate at the University of Uppsala in 1884. His thesis earned him the lowest possible grade short of outright failure. Nineteen years later, the same thesis, which was on the conductivity of solutions, earned him a Nobel Prize. He later explained the initial poor reception: "I came to my professor, Cleve, whom I admired very much, and I said, 'I have a new theory of electrical conductivity as a cause of chemical reactions.' He said, 'This is very interesting,' and then he said, 'Goodbye.' He explained to me later that he knew very well that there are so many different theories formed, and that they are almost all certain to be wrong, for after a short time they disappeared; and therefore, by using the statistical manner of forming his ideas, he concluded that my theory also would not exist long."

Arrhenius's understanding of electrolytic conduction was not his only shrug-provoking new idea. As he surveyed the first few decades of the Industrial Revolution, he realized that man was burning coal at an unprecedented rate—"evaporating our coal mines into the air." Scientists already knew that carbon dioxide, a by-product of fossil-fuel combustion, trapped solar infrared radiation that would otherwise have been reflected back to space. The French polymath Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Fourier had speculated about the effect nearly a century before, and had even used the hothouse metaphor. But it was Arrhenius, employing measurements of infrared radiation from the full moon, who did the first calculations of the possible effects of man's stepped-up production of carbon dioxide. The average global temperature, he concluded, would rise as much as nine degrees Fahrenheit if the amount of carbon dioxide in the air doubled from its pre-industrial level; that is, heat waves in mid-American latitudes would run as high as a hundred and thirty degrees, the seas would rise several metres, crops would wither in the fields.

This idea floated in obscurity for a very long time. Now and then, a scientist took it up—the British physicist G. S. Callendar speculated in the nineteen-thirties that rising carbon-dioxide levels could account for the warming of North America and northern Europe which meteorologists had begun to observe in the eighteen-eighties. But that warming seemed to be replaced by a decline, beginning in the nineteen-forties; in any case, we were too busy creating better living through petroleum to be bothered with such long-term speculation. And the few scientists who did consider the matter concluded that the oceans, which hold much more carbon dioxide than the



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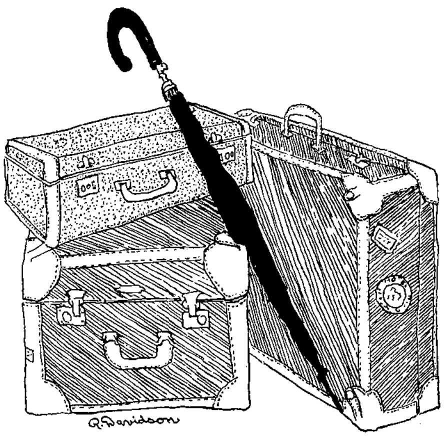
atmosphere, would soak up any excess that man churned out—that the oceans were an infinite sink down which to pour the problem.

Then, in 1957, two scientists at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, in California, Roger Revelle and Hans Suess, published a paper in the journal *Tellus* on this question of the oceans. What they found may turn out to be the single most important limit in an age of limits. They found that the conventional wisdom was wrong: the upper layer of the oceans, where the air and sea meet and transact their business, would absorb less than half of the excess carbon dioxide produced by man. "A rather small change in the amount of free carbon dioxide dissolved in seawater corresponds to a relatively large change in the pressure of carbon dioxide at which the oceans and atmosphere are at equilibrium," they wrote. That is to say, most of the carbon dioxide being pumped into the air by millions of smokestacks, furnaces, and car exhausts would stay in the air, where, presumably, it would gradually warm the planet. "Human beings are now carrying out a large-scale geophysical experiment of a kind that could not have happened in the past nor be repeated in the future," they concluded, adding, with the morbid dispassion of true scientists, that this experiment, "if adequately documented, may yield a far-reaching insight into the processes of weather and climate." While there are other parts to this story—the depletion of the *ozone*, *acid rain*, *genetic engineering*—the story of the end of nature centers on this greenhouse experiment, with what will happen to the weather.

WHEN we drill into an oil field, we tap into a vast reservoir of organic matter—the fossilized remains of aquatic algae. We unbury it. When we burn oil—or coal, or methane (natural gas)—we release its carbon into the atmosphere in the form of carbon dioxide. This is not pollution in the conventional sense. Carbon monoxide is pollution—an unnecessary by-product; a clean-burning engine releases less of it. But when it comes to carbon dioxide a clean-burning engine is no better than the motor in a Model T. It will emit about five and a half pounds of carbon in the form of carbon dioxide for every gallon of gasoline it consumes. In the course of about a hundred years, our various engines and industries have released a very large portion of the carbon buried over the last five hundred million years. It is as if someone had scrimped and saved his entire life and then spent everything on one fantastic week's debauch. In this, if in nothing else, wrote the great biologist A. J. Lotka, "the present is an eminently atypical epoch." We are living on our capital, as we began to realize during the oil crises of the nineteen-seventies. But it is more than waste, more than a binge. We are spending that capital in such a way as to alter the atmosphere.

There has always been, at least since the start of life, a certain amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and it has always trapped a certain amount of the sun's radiation to warm the earth. If there were no atmospheric carbon dioxide, our world might resemble Mars: it would probably be so cold as to be lifeless. A little greenhouse effect is a good thing—life thrives in its warmth. The question is: How much? On Venus, the atmosphere is ninety-seven per cent carbon dioxide. As a result, it traps infrared radiation a hundred times as efficiently as the earth's atmosphere, and keeps the planet a toasty seven hundred degrees warmer than the earth. The earth's atmosphere is mostly nitrogen and oxygen; it is only about .035 per cent carbon dioxide, which is hardly more than a trace. The worries about the greenhouse effect are worries about raising that figure to .055 or .06 per cent, which is not very much. But enough, it turns out, to make everything different.

In 1957, when Revelle and Suess wrote their paper, no one even knew for certain whether carbon dioxide was increasing. The Scripps Institution hired a young researcher, Charles Keeling, and he set up monitoring stations at the South Pole and on the side of Mauna Loa, in Hawaii, eleven thousand feet above the Pacific. His data soon confirmed their hypothesis: more and more carbon dioxide was entering the atmosphere. When the first readings were taken, in 1958, the atmosphere at Mauna Loa contained about three hundred and fifteen parts per million of carbon dioxide. Subsequent readings showed that each year the amount increased, and at a steadily growing rate. Initially, the annual increase was about seven-tenths of a part per million; in recent years, the rate has doubled, to one and a half parts per million. Admittedly, one and a half parts per million sounds absurdly small. But scientists, by drilling holes in glaciers and testing the air trapped in ancient ice, have calculated that the carbon-dioxide level in the atmosphere prior to the Industrial Revolution was about two hundred and eighty parts per million, and that this was as high a level as had been recorded in the past hundred and forty thousand years. At a rate of one and a half parts per million per year, the pre-Industrial Revolution concentration of carbon dioxide would double in the next hundred and forty years. Since, as we have seen, carbon dioxide at a very low level largely determines the climate, carbon dioxide at double that very low level, small as it is in absolute terms, could have an enormous effect.



And the annual increase seems nearly certain to go higher. The essential facts are demographic and economic, not chemical. The world's population has more than tripled in this century, and is expected to double, and perhaps triple again, before reaching a plateau in the next century. Moreover, the tripled population has not contented itself with using only three times the resources. In the last hundred years, industrial production has grown fiftyfold. Four-fifths of that growth has come since 1950, almost all of it based on fossil fuels. In the next half century, a United Nations commission predicts, the planet's thirteen-trillion-dollar economy will grow five to ten times larger.

These facts are almost as stubborn as the chemistry of infrared absorption. They mean that the world will use more energy—two to three per cent more a year, by most estimates. And the largest increases may come in the use of coal—which is bad news, since coal

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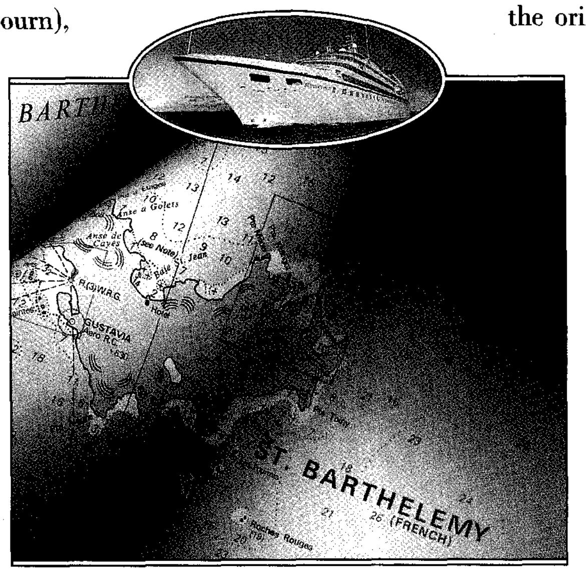

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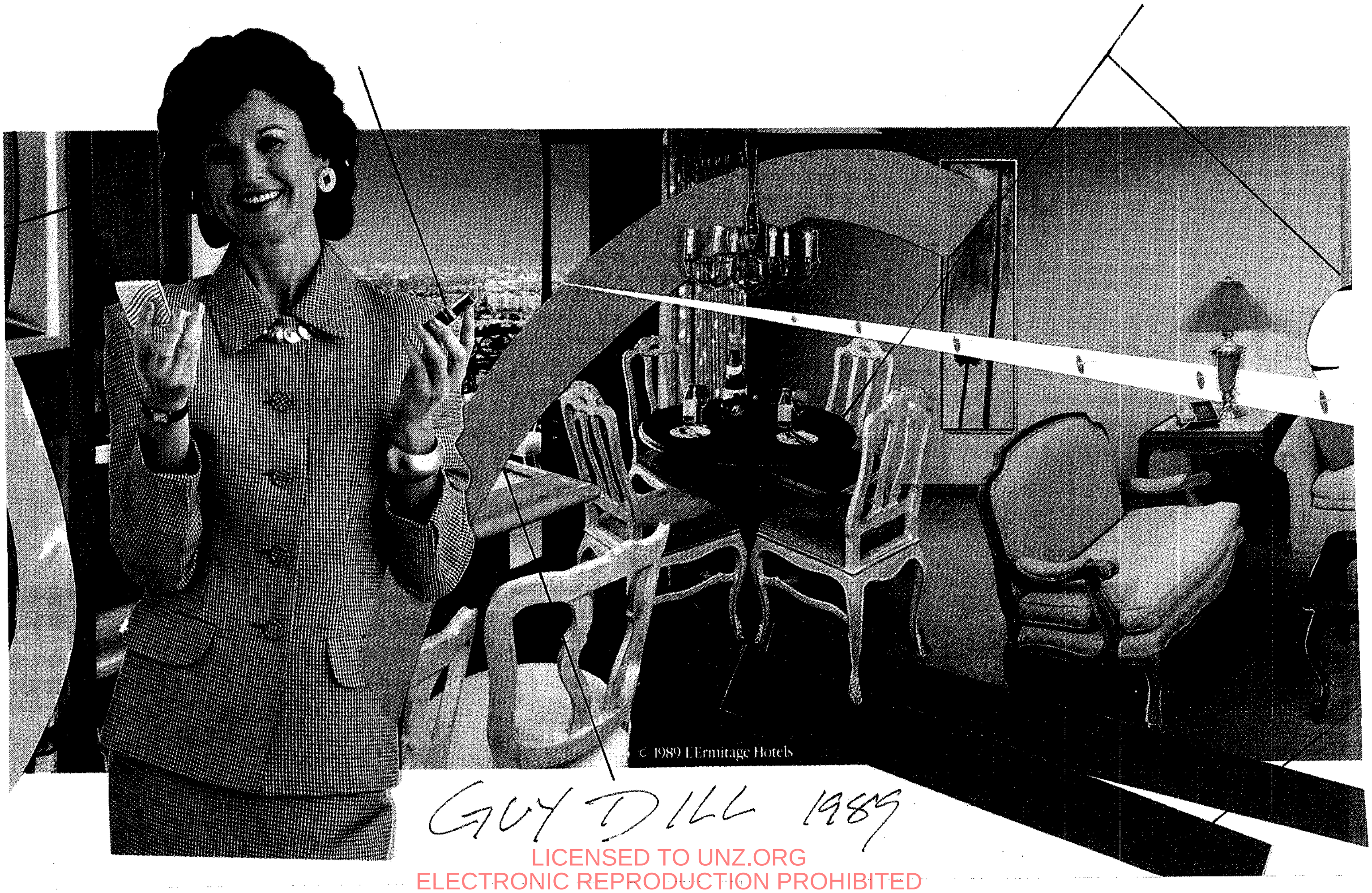
spews more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than any other fuel. China, which has the world's largest hard-coal reserves and recently passed the Soviet Union as the world's largest coal producer, has plans to almost double coal consumption by the year 2000. A model devised by the World Resources Institute predicts that if energy use and other contributions to carbon-dioxide levels continue to grow very quickly, the amount of atmospheric carbon dioxide will have doubled from its pre-Industrial Revolution level by about 2040; if they grow somewhat more slowly, as most estimates have it, the amount will double by about 2070. And, unfortunately, the solutions are neither obvious nor easy. Installing some kind of scrubber on a power-plant smokestack to get rid of the carbon dioxide might seem an obvious fix, except that a system that removed ninety per cent of the carbon dioxide would reduce the effective capacity of the plant by eighty per cent. One often heard suggestion is to use more nuclear power. But, because so much of our energy is consumed by automobiles and the like, even if we mustered the political will and the economic resources to quickly replace each of our non-nuclear electric plants with nuclear ones our carbon-dioxide output would fall by only about thirty per cent. The same argument would apply, at least initially, to fusion or any other clean method of producing electricity.

Burning fossil fuels is not the only method human beings have devised to increase the level of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Burning down a forest also sends clouds of carbon dioxide into the air. Trees and shrubby forests still cover forty per cent of the land on earth, but the forests have shrunk by about a fifth since pre-agricultural times, and the shrinkage is accelerating. In the Brazilian state of Pará, for instance, nearly seventy thousand square miles were deforested between 1975 and 1986; in the hundred years preceding that decade, settlers had cleared about seven thousand square miles. The Brazilian government has tried to slow the burning, but it employs fewer than nine hundred forest wardens in an area larger than Europe.

This is not news; it is well known that the rain forests are disappearing, and are taking with them a majority of the world's plant and animal species. But forget for a moment that we are losing a unique resource, a cradle of life, irreplaceable grandeur, and so forth. The dense, layered rain forest contains from three to five times as much carbon per acre as an open, dry forest—an acre of Brazil in flames equals between three and five acres of Yellowstone. Deforestation currently adds about a billion tons of carbon to the atmosphere annually, which is twenty per cent or more of the amount produced by the burning of fossil fuels. And that acre of rain forest, which has poor soil and can support crops for only a few years, soon turns to desert or to pastureland. And where there's pasture there are cows. Cows support in their stomachs huge numbers of anaerobic bacteria, which break down the cellulose that cows chew. That is why cows, unlike people, can eat grass. The bugs that digest the cellulose excrete methane, the same natural gas we use as fuel. And unburned methane, like carbon dioxide, traps infrared radiation and warms the earth. In fact, methane is twenty times as efficient as carbon



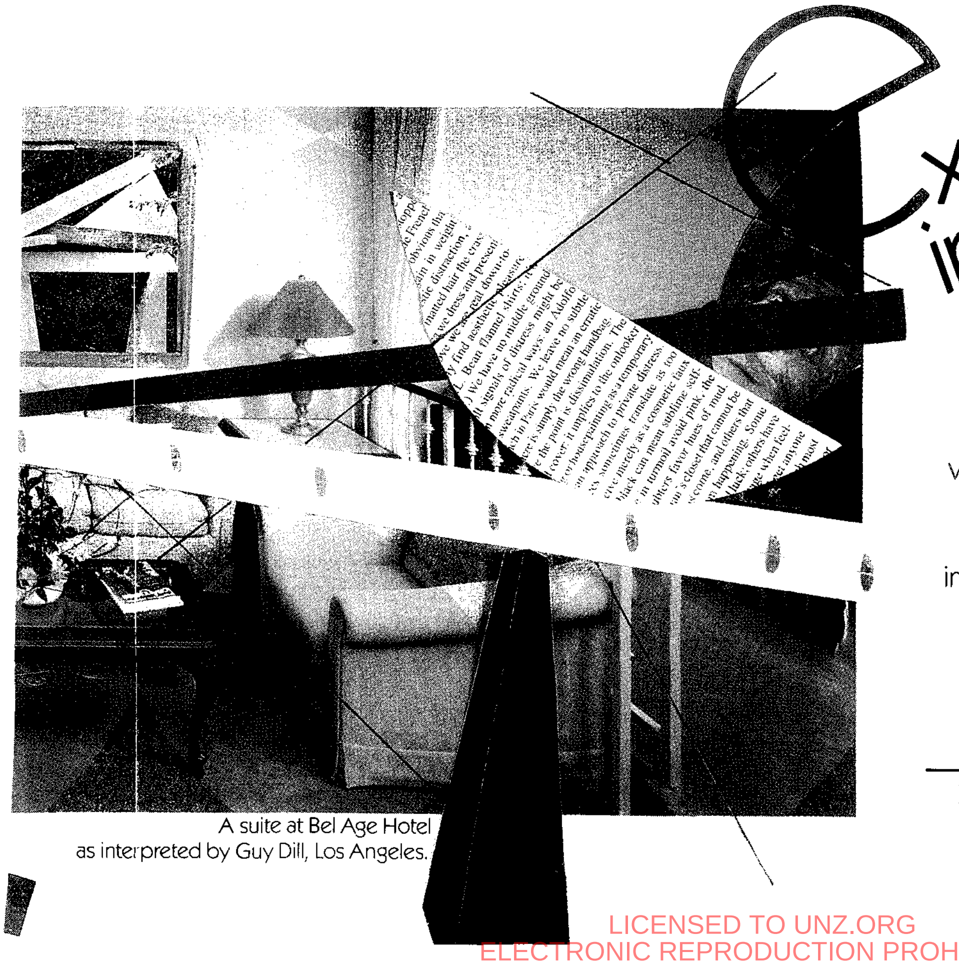
dioxide at warming the planet, so even though it makes up less than two parts per million of the atmosphere it can have a significant effect. Though it may come from seemingly "natural" sources—the methanogenic bacteria—the present huge numbers of these bacteria are man's doing. Mankind owns well over a billion head of cattle, not to mention a large number of camels, horses, pigs, sheep, and goats; together, they belch about seventy-three million metric tons of methane into the air each year—a four-hundred-and-thirty-five-per-cent increase in the last century.

We have raised the number of termites, too. Like cows, termites harbor methanogenic bacteria, which is why they can digest wood. We tend to think of termites as house-wreckers, but in most of the world they are house-builders, erecting elaborate, rock-hard mounds twenty or thirty feet high. If a bulldozer razes a mound, worker termites can rebuild it in hours. Like most animals, they seem limited only by the supply of food. When we clear a rain forest, all of a sudden there is dead wood everywhere—food galore. As deforestation has proceeded, termite numbers have boomed; Patrick Zimmerman, of the National Center for Atmospheric Research, in Boulder, Colorado, estimates that there is more than half a ton of termites for every man, woman, and child on earth. Termites excrete phenomenal amounts of methane: a single mound may give off five litres a minute.

Researchers differ on the importance of termites as a methane source, but they agree about rice paddies. The oxygenless mud of marsh bottoms has always sheltered the methane-producing bacteria. (Methane is sometimes known as swamp gas.) But rice paddies may be even more efficient; the rice plants themselves act a little like straws, venting as much as a hundred and fifteen million tons of methane annually. And rice paddies must increase in number and size every year, to feed the world's growing population. Then, there are landfills. Twenty per cent of a typical landfill is putrescible: it rots, creating carbon dioxide and methane. At the main New York City landfill, on Staten Island, the methane is pumped from under the trash straight to the stoves of thousands of homes, but at most landfills it just seeps out.

What's more, some scientists have begun to think that these sources by themselves may not account for all the methane. For one thing, an enormous amount of methane is locked up as hydrates in the tundra and in the mud of the continental shelves. These are, in essence, methane ices; the ocean muds alone may hold ten trillion tons of methane. If the greenhouse effect warms the oceans, if it begins to thaw the permafrost, then those ices could start to melt. Some estimates of the potential methane release from the ocean muds run as high as six hundred million tons a year—an amount that would more than double the present atmospheric concentration. This would be a nasty example of a feedback loop: warm the atmosphere and release methane; release methane and warm the atmosphere; and so on.

When all the sources of methane are combined, we have done an even more dramatic job of increasing methane than of increasing carbon dioxide. Samples of ice from Antarctic glaciers



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show that the concentration of methane in the atmosphere has fluctuated between 0.3 and 0.7 parts per million for the last hundred and sixty thousand years, reaching its highest levels during the earth's warmest periods. In 1987, methane composed 1.7 parts per million of the atmosphere; that is, there is now two and a half times as much methane in the atmosphere as there was at any time since the onset of the ice age preceding the most recent one. The level is now increasing at a rate of one per cent a year.

Man is also pumping smaller quantities of other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Nitrous oxide, the chlorofluorocarbons—which are notorious for their ability to destroy the planet's ozone layer—and several more all trap warmth with greater efficiency than carbon dioxide. Methane and the rest of these gases, even though their concentrations are small, will together account for fifty per cent of the projected greenhouse warming. They are as much of a problem as carbon dioxide. And as all these compounds warm the atmosphere it will be able to hold more water vapor—itself a potent greenhouse gas. The British Meteorological Office calculates that this extra water vapor will warm the earth two-thirds as much as the carbon dioxide alone.

MOST discussion of the greenhouse gases rushes immediately to their future consequences, without pausing to let the simple fact of what has already happened sink in: the air around us—even where it's clean, and smells like spring, and is filled with birds—is significantly changed. We have substantially altered the earth's atmosphere.

That said, the question of what this new atmosphere means must arise. The direct effects are unnoticeable. Anyone who lives indoors breathes carbon dioxide at a level several times the atmospheric concentration without suffering any harm; the federal government limits industrial workers to a chronic exposure of five thousand parts per million, or almost fifteen times the current atmospheric level. A hundred years from now, a child at recess will still breathe far less carbon dioxide than a child in a classroom. This, however, is only mildly good news. Changes in the atmosphere will change the weather, and *that* will change recess. The weather—the temperature, the amount of rainfall, the speed of the wind—will change. The chemistry of the atmosphere may seem an abstraction, a text written in a foreign language. But its translation into the weather of New York and Cincinnati and San Francisco will change the life of each of us.

Theories about the effects all begin with an estimate of expected warming. The wave of concern that began with Revelle and Suess's article and Keeling's Mauna Loa and South Pole data has led to the development of complex computer models of the entire globe. The models agree that when, as has been predicted, carbon dioxide (or the equivalent combination of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases) doubles from the pre-Industrial Revolution level, the average global temperature will increase, and that the increase will be one and a half to five and a half degrees Celsius, or three to ten degrees Fahrenheit. Perhaps the most famous of these computer models has been constructed by James Hansen and his colleagues at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. Even though it remains a rough simulation of the real world, they have improved it to the point where they are willing to forecast not just the effects of a doubling of carbon dioxide but the incremental effects along the way—that is, not just the forecast for 2050 but the one for 2000.

Take Dallas, for instance. According to Hansen's calculations, the doubled level of gases would increase the annual number of days with temperatures above 100°F. from nineteen to seventy-eight. On sixty-eight days, as opposed to the current four, the nighttime temperature wouldn't fall below 80°F. A hundred and sixty-two days a year—half the year, essentially—the temperature would top 90°F. New York City would have forty-eight days a year above the ninety-degree mark, up from fifteen at present. And so on. This would clearly change the world as we know it. One of Hansen's colleagues told reporters, "It reaches a hundred and twenty degrees in Phoenix now. Will people still live there if it's a hundred and thirty degrees? A hundred and forty?" (And such heat waves are possible even if the average global increase, figured over a year, is only a couple of degrees, since any average conceals huge swings.) These changes, Hansen and his colleagues said in a paper published last fall in the *Journal of Geophysical Research*, should begin to be obvious to the man in the street by the early nineteen-nineties; that is, the odds of a very hot summer will, thanks to the greenhouse effect, become better than even beginning now.

In recent years, there have, of course, been any number of doom-laden prophecies that haven't come true—oil is selling at eighteen dollars a barrel, half its price just a few years ago. Is the warming theory valid? The obvious way to check is to measure the temperature and see if it's going up. But this is easier said than done. In the first place, the warming doesn't show up immediately. The oceans can hold a lot of heat; the warming so far may be stored there, ready to re-radiate out to the atmosphere, the way the sun's heat is held through the night by a rock. This "thermal lag" may be as little as ten years, as much as a hundred. And when you check the thermometers it won't do to measure only a few places for only a few years, because climate is "noisy"—full of random fluctuations. (If you had spent this summer in Tucson, for example, you would have been sure that something was happening: the city set forty-seven high-temperature records. New York, by contrast, has had fairly normal summer temperatures.) To find what climatologists call the "warming signal" through the static of naturally cold and hot years requires an enormous effort. Two such studies have been done—one by Hansen and his NASA colleagues, the other at the University of East Anglia. The studies reach back to 1880, when scientists first began systematic weather observations. To find truly global averages, they include readings from thousands of land-based and shipboard monitoring stations. Both studies conclude that the earth's temperature increased a little more than a degree Fahrenheit from 1880 to 1980. This is consistent with what most of the greenhouse models indicate. Updates of both studies show that the four warmest years on record occurred in the nineteen-eighties; the rise is accelerating as more gases enter the air, just as the models indicate. The British study lists the six warmest years on record as (in descending order) 1988, 1987, 1983, 1981, 1980, and 1986.

In 1988, the American drought hit the heart of the Grain Belt, where most of the nation's and much of the world's food is grown. It followed a dry fall and winter, so its effects were quickly evident; the Mississippi River, for example, sank to its lowest level since 1872, when the Navy began taking measurements. And just about the time that the pictures on television began to grab everyone's attention it got very, very hot in the urban East, where those in the government and the media establishment, among others, have their homes. It happened that in late June, as the anxiety intensified—newscasters telling us that the next two weeks were crucial for corn pollination, meteorologists issuing pessimistic sixty-day forecasts—the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing on the greenhouse effect. It was actually the second part of the hearing. Part I had been held the previous November, when, according to the Louisiana Democrat J. Bennett

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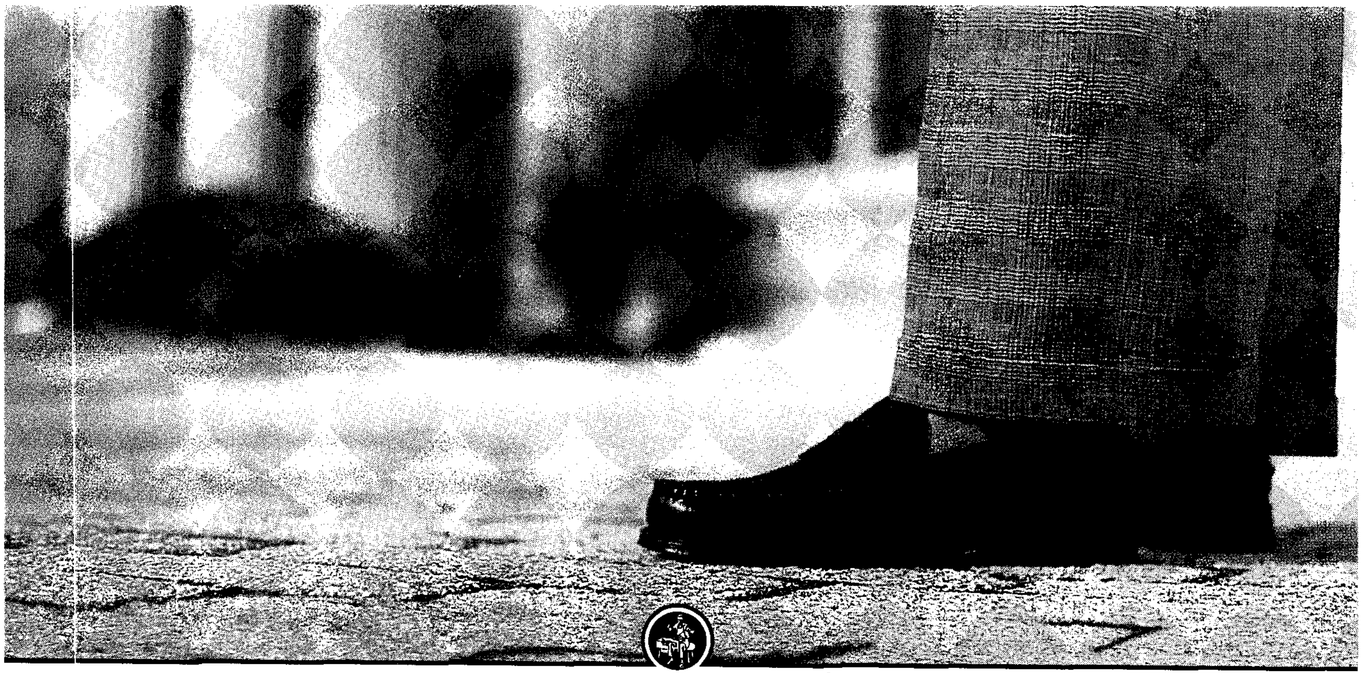

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Johnston, the senators listened with "concern" as they were told that one expected result of the greenhouse effect would be a drying of the Midwest and the Southeast. But now, "as we experience a-hundred-and-one-degree temperatures in Washington, D.C., and [reduced] soil moisture across the Midwest is ruining the soybean crops, the corn crops, the cotton crops," Senator Johnston said, concern was giving way to "alarm." Several of the senators said that they had already read the report of Dr. Hansen, the chief witness, and predicted that it would startle listeners. Hansen's report, Dale Bumpers, of Arkansas, said, should be "cause for headlines in every newspaper in America tomorrow morning." As it turned out, he was not exaggerating. Hansen testified that he was ready to state that the warming signal was beginning to emerge above the noise of normal weather, that there was only a one per cent chance that the temperature increases seen in the last few years were accidental, and that we now lived in the greenhouse world.

It was a claim no other established scientist had made—certainly not one on a government payroll. The reaction was much as the senators had expected. The next day's *Times*, for instance, ran a story at the top of the front page under the headline "GLOBAL WARMING HAS BEGUN, EXPERT TELLS SENATE." The message was finally getting across, nearly a century after Arrhenius and three decades after Revelle and Suess. But the heat of the day may have been a mixed blessing; though it focussed everyone's attention on the issue, it also led most people to think that what Hansen had said was that the heat and drought of 1988 were greenhouse-related. Strictly speaking, that is not what he had testified to. "It is not possible to blame a specific heat wave or drought on the greenhouse effect," he said—and, indeed, some experts think that the drought and heat of 1988 were mainly the result of a fluctuation of tropical ocean currents which steered the North American jet stream, with its cargo of rainstorms, north of the Great Plains.

What we *can* blame the carbon dioxide and the methane for is a longer-range pattern. Even if the summer of 1988 had been cool and damp, even if there had been mushrooms growing in the wheat fields of Kansas, Hansen would have said the same thing. What had convinced him was not the devastation in the Midwest or the misery in the Eastern cities but the numbers that his computer kept spitting at him. "There are two time scales to consider," he explained, some months after giving his testimony. "One is the last three complete decades, for which the natural variability in temperature has been calculated—it is about point thirteen degrees Celsius. This coincides roughly with the thirty years for which we have precise measurements of carbon dioxide and other gases. And our readings show that the global mean temperature has risen about point four degrees in the three-decade period. The other is the larger record—the observations back to the eighteen-eighties. Over that period, there's been about a point-six-degree-Celsius rise. Now, over a longer period there's also more natural variability—sources like fluctuations in solar activity, deep ocean circulation, and so forth." The standard deviation over the longer period, he noted, was about .2°C. So in both cases Hansen's observed rise was almost exactly three times the standard deviation. "There's no magic point where you pick out the signal," he said. "But when it gets to three sigma—when it gets to three times the standard deviation—you're getting to a level where it's unlikely to be an accidental warming."

Some recent studies tend to agree with Hansen's conclusion that the warming has already begun: precipitation appears to have increased above 35 degrees north latitude and decreased below it since the early nineteen-fifties, for instance—a result anticipated in the greenhouse models. And some investigators have found a "variable but widespread" warming of the Alaskan permafrost, which changes temperature much more slowly than the air and thus may provide a better record.

But not all scientists—not even all those committed to the greenhouse theory—believe that the warming has already begun. Hansen, though well respected, is out on a limb, if a fairly stout one. Some have taken issue with his use of statistics, and others with his outspokenness. At a workshop on global warming at Amherst College this spring, the assembled climatologists concluded that while it was "tempting to attribute" the recent warm years to the greenhouse effect "such an attribution

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cannot now be made with any degree of confidence." Stephen Schneider, a senior scientist at the National Center for Atmospheric Research and a longtime proponent of the greenhouse theory, offers a gambler's analogy: the warm years of the nineteen-eighties, he says, are not "proof" of a warming any more than a dealer's drawing four aces "proves" that he's dealing from the bottom of the deck. "Different tastes cause some people to accept the reality of a hypothesized climatic change at a low signal-to-noise ratio, whereas others might not believe in the reality of the change until a large signal has persisted for a very long time," Schneider told the Senate two months after Hansen testified. "Quite simply, accepting any particular signal-to-noise ratio as 'proof' of global warming reflects the personal judgment of the investigator."

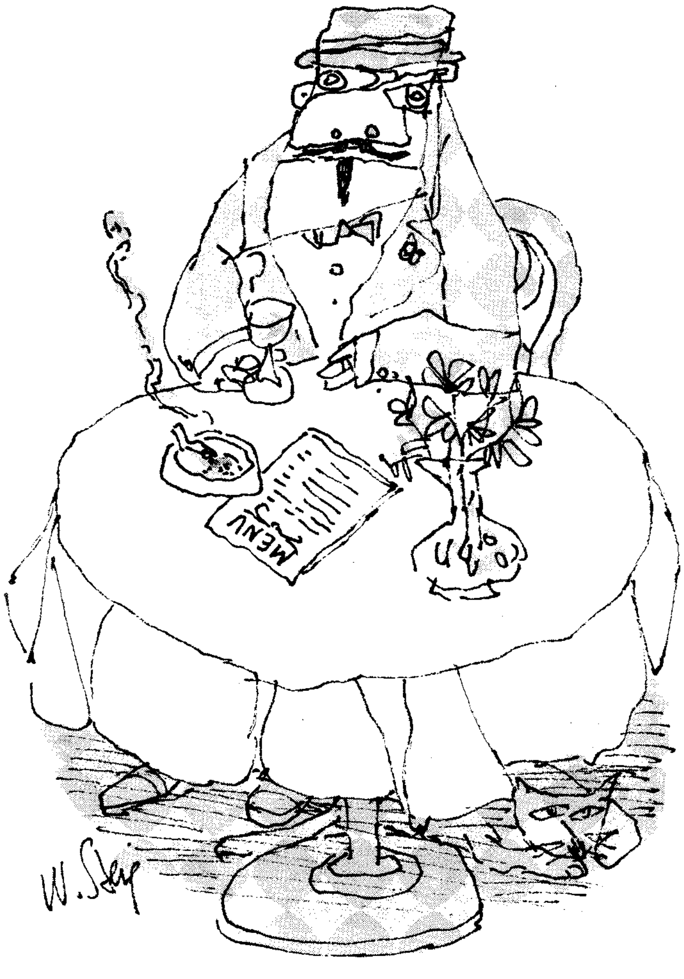
Kenneth Watt, a professor of zoology and environmental studies at the University of California at Davis, says that studies such as Hansen's fail to correct enough for the "urban-heat-island effect"—a phenomenon well known to meteorologists, in which, as cities grow up around thermometers, concrete and exhaust skew readings. There's also no guarantee that other factors—solar flares, perhaps, which coincide with both warming and cooling trends, or the strong El Niño current of recent years—aren't skewing the readings. Last January, Tim Barnett, a climatologist at Scripps, correctly forecast much cooler low-latitude temperatures for the first part of this year as a result of "La Niña," a tropical "cold event" that is the opposite of El Niño. During the summer of 1988, in some parts of the ocean off equatorial South America the water temperature dropped 7°F. Hansen saw the dip in his computer data, and he agrees that it may make this year's over-all readings go down. "But such things are bumps," he says.

But few of the objections are to the theory as a whole. Everyone in the scientific community agrees that carbon dioxide is on the rise, and almost everyone believes that the rise cannot help having some effect. An occasional scientist says that the onset of the effect may be delayed as much as forty years, but this is considerably different from dismissing it. Last May, Hansen returned to Capitol Hill to tell the Senate's Science, Technology, and Space Subcommittee that his studies showed a definite danger of future drought. The White House tried to alter his testimony, arguing that, in the words of the Presidential press secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, "there are many points of view on the global-warming issue." But Fitzwater didn't cite any studies undercutting Hansen's, and the same day Stephen Schneider assured the subcommittee that "there is virtually no scientific controversy" over the contention that more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere will produce higher temperatures. "That's not a speculative theory," he said.

THERE is debate, though, over the question of what will happen as the heating begins. A large-scale change in the climate will set off a series of other changes, and while some of these would make the problem worse, others might lessen it. Skeptics are inclined to argue that the warming will trigger some natural compensatory brake. S. Fred Singer, a professor of environmental sciences at the University of Virginia, has assumed a part-time role as greenhouse curmudgeon, expressing his doubts to reporters and on various Op-Ed pages. He grants that the earth's temperature should increase "provided that all other factors remain the same." But, he says, they won't. "For example, as oceans warm and more water vapor enters the atmosphere, the greenhouse effect will increase somewhat, but so should cloudiness—which can keep out incoming solar radiation and thereby reduce the warming." There are other possibilities. "The feedbacks are enormously complicated," Michael MacCracken, of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, in California, told *Time* in 1987. "It's like a Rube Goldberg machine in the sense of the number of things that interact in order to tip the world into fire or ice."

The computer models have tried to incorporate such factors. In some cases, Hansen admits, we simply don't have enough knowledge to make more than educated guesses; the behavior of the oceans is something of a wild card, and so are the clouds. (The difficulty of estimating cloud feedback is a major reason that most warming predictions are expressed as a range of temperatures, and not as a single number.) But almost every doubt is double-edged. Low-level stratocumulus clouds reflect a lot of solar radiation and might tend to cool the earth. Monsoon clouds, on the other hand, are long and thin, and let in the sun's heat while preventing its escape. Hansen's work suggests that the over-all effect of clouds will be to increase the warming.

A variety of other feedback effects have also been identified and tallied



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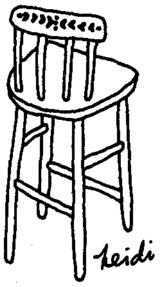
up. For instance, every surface has an albedo—a degree to which it reflects light. A polar ice cap, or a white shirt, has a high albedo—a large proportion of the sun's rays are reflected back into space. If the ice is replaced by dark-blue ocean, more heat will be absorbed. Tropical rain forests absorb a lot of heat now; if they turn to deserts, these deserts will reflect heat. The feedbacks are *products* of the warming signal, and are distinct from phenomena that always have affected and always will affect temperature—volcanoes, say, which can throw up so much dust that it acts as a veil, or El Niños, or solar flares. In any event, the warming estimates provided by the computer models are not worst-case scenarios. They are the middle ground. Stephen Schneider told the Senate energy committee last year that it was "equally likely" that the warming forecasts were too low as that they were too high.



Some of the potential feedbacks are so enormous that they may someday make us almost forget what originally caused the greenhouse warming. Twenty thousand years ago, the land that surrounds my house in the Adirondacks was covered by glaciers that had spread slowly down from Canada, and eventually retreated there. As the ice disappeared, "the fierce ruthlessness of nature gave way to a benevolent mood," in the words of a local writer. "Rains came over the years to chasten the harshness of the landscape. The startling gaping holes in the earth were filled with crystal-clear water. Soft green foliage came to clothe the naked rock-hewn slopes." This was a slow process, and is even now incomplete—some plant and animal species are still migrating up here. Great forests rose on the glacial till and soon created more soil for greater forests, and so on —a process that was first interrupted a couple of hundred years ago, when men began cutting down most of the Adirondack woods. But this interruption was only temporary; just before the turn of this century, New York State, in an early burst of environmental consciousness, began buying huge tracts of land in the Adirondacks and stipulating that they be "forever kept as wild" —off limits to loggers and real-estate developers alike. As a result, this area, though still threatened, is a happy exception—a reforested, replenished zone, a second-chance wilderness.

But the trees that live here don't do so because of the laws; they do so because of the climate. They have slowly marched north as the climate warmed since the end of the last ice age, and if it continued slowly warming they would slowly keep marching; the convoy of pines might march right out of here, and the mass of hardwoods found in lower Appalachian latitudes might march in to replace them. But before we get too used to this marching metaphor it is worth recalling that trees are rooted in the ground; forests move only by the slow growth of new trees along their edges. In a year, a forest moves, naturally, a half mile at most. Which is fine, if that's how slowly the climate is changing. The computer models, however, project an increase in average global temperature as high as one degree Fahrenheit per decade. An increase of one degree in average global temperature moves the climatic zone some thirty-five to fifty miles north. So if the temperature increases one degree per decade the forest surrounding my home would be due at the Canadian border by 2020, which is just about the time that we'd be expecting the trees from a hundred miles south to start arriving. They won't—half a mile a year is as fast as forests move. The trees outside my window will still be there, but they'll be dead or dying.

Eventually, perhaps within a few decades, forests—or, at least, scrub better adapted to the new conditions—will replace the forests that expired. But in the meantime those dead forests will release tremendous amounts of carbon to the atmosphere. Last year's Yellowstone fires released carbon amounting to 2.8 per cent of this country's annual emissions from fossil fuels; that is, in a dozen weeks, on only about a million and a half acres, the fires released as much carbon as ten days' worth of driving, home heating, factory production, motorboating, and so on. The world's forests, plants, and soil (which gives up its carbon much more rapidly as trees die) contain more than two trillion tons of carbon, probably more than a third of it in the middle and high latitudes. By contrast, the atmosphere at present contains only about seven hundred and fifty billion tons. So even a fairly small change in the forests could substantially increase the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, intensifying the warming.

This vast decline, this forest "dieback," is not some distant proposition. A 1988 study issued by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environmental Program found that, given a fairly rapid warming, "reproductive failure and forest dieback is estimated to begin between 2000 and 2050." A University of Virginia study predicts what Michael Oppenheimer, of the Environmental Defense Fund, calls "biomass crashes" in the pine forests of the southeastern United States over the next forty years if the warming continues. Last September, James Hansen told reporters that the birch trees and many of the evergreens of the Northeast "may have a hard time surviving, even in the next ten to twenty years." There are signs—frightening signs—that some of the feedback loops are starting to kick in. In May, George Woodwell, a biologist at the Woods Hole Research Center, told the Senate's science-and-technology subcommittee that the annual one-and-a-half-parts-per-million increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide seemed to have surged upward in the last eighteen months to two and a half parts per million. "I'm suggesting that the warming of the earth is increasing the decay of organic matter," he said, adding that such an event had not been worked into the computer climate models—in other words, their estimates of future warming might well be too low.

For the moment, though, forget about the higher temperatures and the dead trees and the other effects. The physical consequences of increasing the level of carbon dioxide will be staggering, but no more staggering than the simple fact of what we have already done. Carbon-dioxide levels have gone up significantly, and globally. Elevated levels can be measured far from industry and miles above the ground. And the changes are irrevocable. They are not possibilities. They cannot be wished away, and they cannot be legislated away. To prevent them, we would have had to clean up our collective act many decades ago. We have done this ourselves—by driving our cars, running our factories, clearing our forests, growing our rice, turning on our air-

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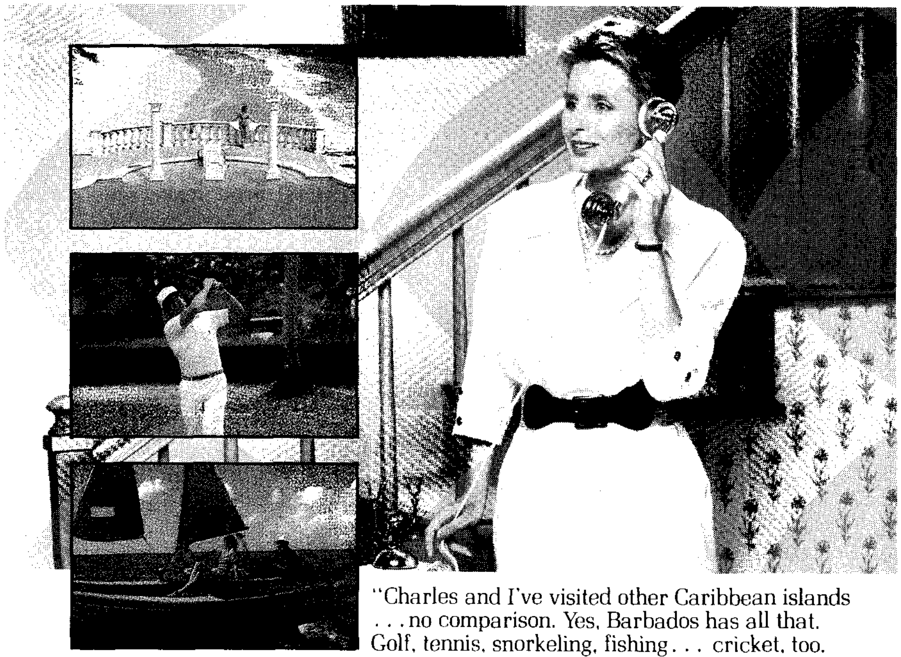

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conditioners. In the years since the Civil War, and especially in the years since the Second World War, we have changed the atmosphere—changed it enough so that the climate will change dramatically. Most of the major events of human history gradually lose their meaning: wars that seemed at the time all-important are now a series of dates that schoolchildren don't even try to remember; great feats of engineering crumble in the desert. But now the way of life of one part of the world in one half century is altering every inch and every hour of the planet.

MOST mornings, I hike up the hill outside my back door. Within a hundred yards, the woods swallow me up, and there is nothing to remind me of human society—no trash, no stumps, no fences, not even a real path. Looking out from the high places, you can't see road or house; it is a world apart from man. But once in a while someone will be cutting wood farther down the valley, and the snarl of a chain saw will fill the woods. It is harder these days to get caught up in the timelessness of the forest, for man is nearby. The sound of the chain saw doesn't blot out all the noises of the forest, or drive the animals away, but it does drive away the feeling that you are in another, separate, wild sphere.

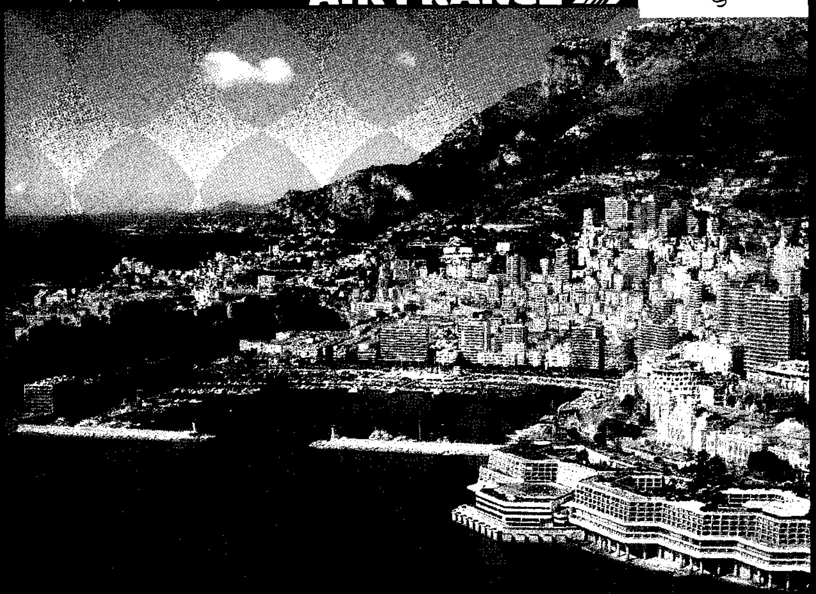
Now that we have changed the most basic forces around us, the noise of that chain saw will always be in the woods. We have changed the atmosphere, and that is changing the weather. The temperature and the rainfall are no longer entirely the work of some uncivilizable force but instead are in part a product of our habits, our economies, our ways of life. Even in the most remote wilderness, where the strictest laws forbid the felling of a single tree, the sound of that saw will be clear, and a walk in the woods will be changed by its whine. The world outdoors will mean the same thing as the world indoors, the hill the same thing as the house. An idea can become extinct, just like an animal or a plant. The idea in this case is "nature"—the wild province, the world apart from man, under whose rules he was born and died. We have not ended rainfall or sunlight. The wind still blows—but not from some other sphere, some inhuman place. It is too early to tell exactly how much harder the wind will blow, how much hotter the sun will shine. That is for the future. But their *meaning* has already changed.

The argument that nature is ended is complex; profound objections to it are possible, and I will try to answer them. But to understand what is ending requires some attention to the past. Not the ancient past, not the big bang or the primal soup—the European exploration of the New World is far enough back, since it is man's *idea* of nature that is important to this discussion, and it was in response to that wild country that much of our modern notion of nature developed. North America was not unaltered by man when the Europeans arrived, but its previous occupants had treated it fairly well. Most of it was still wilderness on the eve of the Revolution, when William Bartram, one of America's first professional naturalists, set out from his native Philadelphia to tour the South. Though some of the land through which he travelled had been settled (he spent a number of nights on plantations), the settlement was sparse, and the fields of indigo and rice gave way quickly to wilderness—not the dark and forbidding wilderness of European fairy tales but a blooming, humming, fertile paradise. Every page of his diary of the journey through "North & South Carolina, Georgia, East & West Florida, the Cherokee Country, the Extensive Territories of the Muscogulges, or Creek Confederacy, and the Country of the Chactaws" shouts of the fecundity, the profligacy, of that fresh land: "I continued several miles [over] verdant swelling knolls, profusely productive of flowers and fragrant strawberries, their rich juice dyeing my horse's feet and ankles." When he stops for dinner, he picks a wild orange, and stews a fresh-caught trout in its juice over his fire.

Whatever direction he struck off in, Bartram found vigorous beauty. His diary brims over with the grand Latin binomials of a thousand plants and animals (*Kalmia latifolia*, "snowy mantled" *Philadelphus inodorus*, *Pinus sylvestris*, *Populus tremula*, *Rheum rhaponticum*, *Magnolia grandiflora*) and also with the warm common names—the bank martin, the water wagtail, the mountain cock, the chattering plover, the bumblebee. But the roll call of his adjectives is even more indicative of his mood. In the account of a single evening, he musters fruitful, fragrant, sylvan (twice), moderately warm, exceeding pleasant, charming, fine, joyful, most beautiful, pale gold, golden, russet, silver (twice), ultramarine, velvet-black, orange, prodigious, gilded, delicious, harmonious, soothing, tuneful, sprightly, elevated, cheerful (twice), high and airy, brisk and cool, clear, sweet, and healthy. And where he can't see, he imagines marvels: the fish disappearing into subterranean streams, "where, probably, they are separated from each other, by innumerable paths, or secret rocky avenues; and after encountering various obstacles, and beholding new and unthought-of scenes of pleasure and disgust, after many days absence from the surface of the world emerge again from the dreary vaults, and appear exulting in gladness, and sporting in the transparent waters of some far distant lake." But he is no Disney—this is no "Fantasia." He is a scientist recording his observations, and words like "cheerful" and "sweet" seem to be technical descriptions of the untouched world in which he wandered.

This sort of joy in the natural world was not a literary convention, a given. Much of literature regarded wilderness as ugly and crude until the Romantic movement of the late eighteenth century; Andrew Marvell, for one, referred to mountains as "ill-designed excrescences." This silliness changed into a new silliness with the Romantics. Chateaubriand's immensely popular "Atala" describes the American wilderness as full of bears "drunk with grapes, and reeling on the branches of the elm trees." But the rapturous fever took on a healthier aspect in this country. Most of the pioneers, to be sure, saw a buffalo as something to hunt, a forest as something to cut down, a flock of passenger pigeons as a call for heavy artillery (farmers would bring their hogs to feed on the carcasses raining down in the slaughter), but there were always a good many—even, or especially, among the hunters and loggers—who recognized and described the beauty and order of this early time.

Of a thousand examples, my favorite single description comes from George Catlin, who travelled the frontier in the eighteen-thirties to paint the portraits of American Indians. In his journal he describes a valley, "far more beautiful than could have been *imagined* by mortal man," in which he



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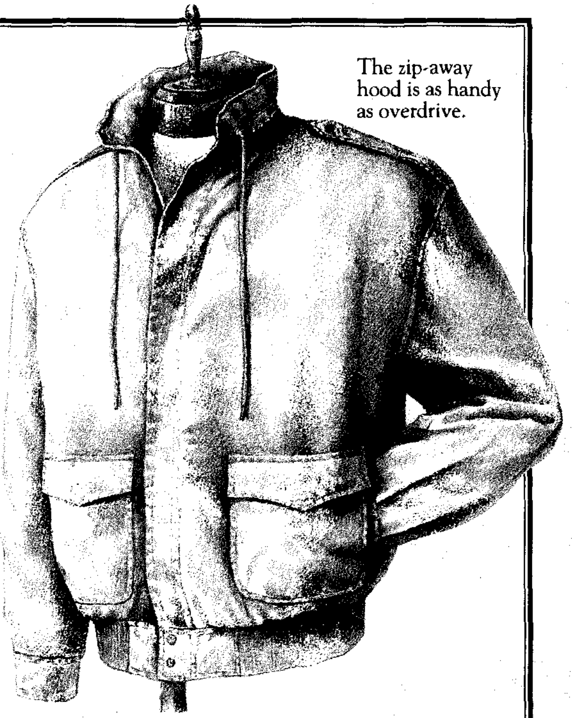

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spent the night on a ride north from Fort Gibson to the Missouri River:

> An enchanting little lawn of five or six acres, on the banks of a cool and rippling stream, that was alive with fish; and every now and then, a fine brood of young ducks, just old enough for delicious food, and too unsophisticated to avoid an easy and simple death. This little lawn was surrounded by bunches and copses of the most luxuriant and picturesque foliage, consisting of lofty *bois d'arcs* and elms, spreading out their huge branches, as if offering protection to the rounded groups of cherry and plum-trees that supported festoons of grapevines, with their purple clusters that hung in the most tempting manner over the green carpet that was everywhere decked out with wild flowers, of all tints and of various sizes, from the modest wild sun-flowers, with their thousand tall and drooping heads, to the lilies that stood, and the violets that crept beneath them. . . . The wild deer . . . were repeatedly rising from their quiet lairs, and bounding out, and over the graceful swells of the prairies which hemmed it in.

If this passage had a little number at the start of each sentence, it could be Genesis; it sticks in my mind as a baseline, a reminder of where we began.

Such visions of the world as it existed outside human history became scarcer with each year that passed. By 1929, when Bob Marshall, a co-founder of the Wilderness Society, set off to explore Alaska's Brooks Range, every stretch of the lower forty-eight had been visited, mapped, and named. Each day of his trek brought eight, ten, a dozen ridges and streams and peaks under his eye, and hence into human history:

> We discovered that Clear River emerged from none of the three gorges we had imagined, but from a hidden valley which turned almost at right angles to the east. I cannot convey in words my feeling in finding this broad valley lying there, just as fresh and untrammelled as at the dawn of geological eras hundreds of millions of years ago. Nor is there any adequate way of describing the scenery. . . . I could mention dozens of thousand-foot sheer precipices; I could liken the valley to a Yosemite without waterfalls, but with rock domes beside which the world-renowned Half Dome would be trivial—yet with all that, I would not have conveyed the sense of the continuous, exulting feeling of immensity. . . . Best of all it was fresh—gloriously fresh. At every step there was the exhilarating feeling of breaking new ground. There were no musty signs of human occupation. This, beyond a doubt, was an unbeaten path.

Marshall was very nearly the last person to see any part of this continent unpolluted even by the knowledge that someone had been there before. His explorations were a last echo of the journeys of discovery that had marked an earlier epoch. It is hard for us to believe that only a hundred and twenty years ago the valley of the Colorado River—the Grand Canyon—was a blank spot on maps of the Southwest, or that fifty years before that the Rockies were a rumor among white men. When Thoreau climbed Mt. Katahdin, in 1846, he could list the five white men who had preceded him to the peak. "I am reminded by my journey how exceedingly new this country still is," Thoreau wrote. "Those Maine woods differ essentially from ours [in Concord]. There you are never reminded that the wilderness which you are threading is, after all, some villager's familiar wood-lot, some widow's thirds, from which her ancestors have sledded fuel for generations, minutely described in some old deed." Nowadays, Katahdin, though preserved as a park, is so jammed with climbers that the authorities must limit their number; sometimes several hundred people are at the summit at once. On a holiday weekend, the trail up Mt. Marcy, the Adirondacks' highest peak, is like Macy's escalators with a heavy balsam scent.

Over time, though, we've reconciled ourselves to the idea that we'll not be the first up any hill. The wonder of nature does not depend on its freshness. The Grand Canyon is so grand that we don't mind not being the first people to see it. But still we feel the need for pristine places. We have legislated wilderness, set aside big tracts of land where, in the words of the federal statute, "the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man." Even if we don't visit them, they matter to us. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, on Alaska's northern shore, is reached by just a few hundred people a year, but it has a vivid life in the minds of many more, who are upset that oil companies want to drill there. They are upset not only because it might harm the caribou but because here is a vast space free of roads and buildings and antennas—a blank spot.

When Rachel Carson wrote "Silent Spring," she was able to find some parts of the Arctic still untouched—no DDT in the fish, the beaver, the beluga, the caribou, the moose, the polar bear, the walrus. The cranberries, the salmonberries, and the wild rhubarb all tested clean, though two snowy owls, probably as a result of their migrations, carried small amounts of the pesticide, as did fat samples from several Eskimos who had been away to the hospital in Anchorage. In other words, as pervasive a problem as DDT was and is, one could always imagine that somewhere a place existed free of its taint. (And, largely as a result of Carson's book, there are more and more such places.) As pervasive and growing as the problem of acid rain surely is, at the moment places still exist with a rainfall of an acceptable pH. And if we wished to stop acid rain we could: experimenters have raised tents over groves of trees to demonstrate that if the acid bath ceases a forest will return to normal. Even the radiation from an event as nearly universal as the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant has begun to fade, and Scandinavians can once more eat some of the vegetables they grow. The idea of wildness, then, can survive most of man's destruction of nature. If the ground is dusty and trodden, we look at the sky; if the sky is smoggy, we travel to some place where it's clear; if we can't travel to some place where it's clear, we imagine ourselves in Alaska or Australia or some other place where it is, and that works nearly as well. Nature is durable in our imaginations. The idea of wildness has outlasted the exploration of the entire globe. Standing in the middle of a grimy English mill town, George Orwell reflected, "In spite of hard trying, man has not yet succeeded in doing his dirt everywhere. The earth is so vast and still so empty that even in the filthy heart of civilization you find fields where the grass is green instead of grey; perhaps if you looked for them you might even find streams with live fish in them instead of salmon tins."

But now the basis of that faith is lost. The idea of nature will not survive the new, global pollution—the carbon dioxide and the methane and the like. This new rupture with nature is different both in scope and in kind from salmon tins in an English stream. We have deprived nature of its independence, and that is fatal to its meaning. Nature's independence *is* its meaning.

If you travel by plane and dog team and snowshoe to the farthest corner of the Arctic and it is a mild summer day, you will not know whether the temperature is what it is "supposed" to be or whether you are standing in the equivalent of a heated room. If the wind is howling and the temperature is twenty

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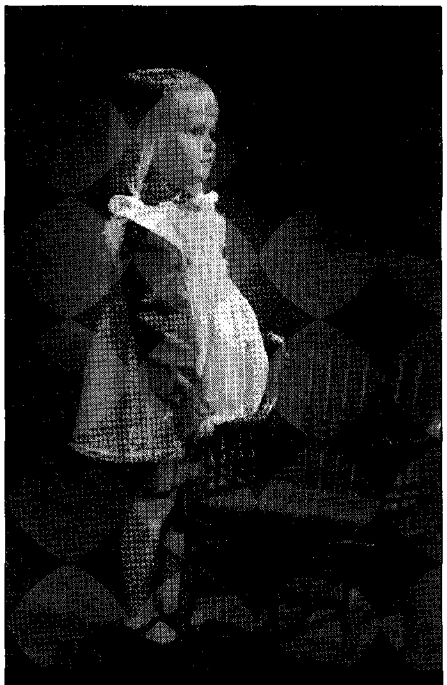

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below, might it otherwise be forty below? Since most of us get to the North Pole only in our minds, our situation is more like this: if, in July, there's a heat wave in London, it won't be a natural phenomenon. It will be a man-made phenomenon—an amplification of what nature intended, or a total invention. Or it *might* be a man-made phenomenon, which amounts to the same thing. The storm that could have snapped the hot spell may never form, or may veer off in some other direction—not by the laws of nature but by the laws of nature as rewritten by man. If the sun feels sweet on the back of your neck, well, that's fine, but it isn't nature. What has happened is the extinction of summer and its replacement with something else that will be called "summer." This new summer will retain some of the season's relative characteristics—it will be hotter than the rest of the year, for instance, and it will be the time of year when crops grow—but it will not be summer, just as even the best prosthesis is not a leg. Those "record highs" and "record lows" that the weathermen are always talking about are meaningless now. They imply a connection between the past and the present which doesn't exist. And, of course, climate determines an enormous amount of the rest of nature—where the forests stop and the tundra or the prairies begin, where the rain falls and where the arid deserts squat, where the wind blows strong and steady, where the glaciers form, how fast the lakes evaporate, and how high the seas rise.

About half a mile from my house, right at the head of a small lake, the town has installed a street light. It is the only one for miles, and it is a good thing that it is there; without it, a car or two each summer would miss the turn and end up in the drink. Still, it intrudes on the dark. Most of the year, once the summer people have left, there is not another light to be seen. On a starry night, the Milky Way stands out like a marquee; on a cloudy night, you can walk in pitch-black darkness, unable to see even the dog trotting at your side. But then, around a bend, there is the street lamp, breaking up the feeling of the night. And now it is as if we had put a huge lamp in the sky and cast that same prosaic light everywhere.

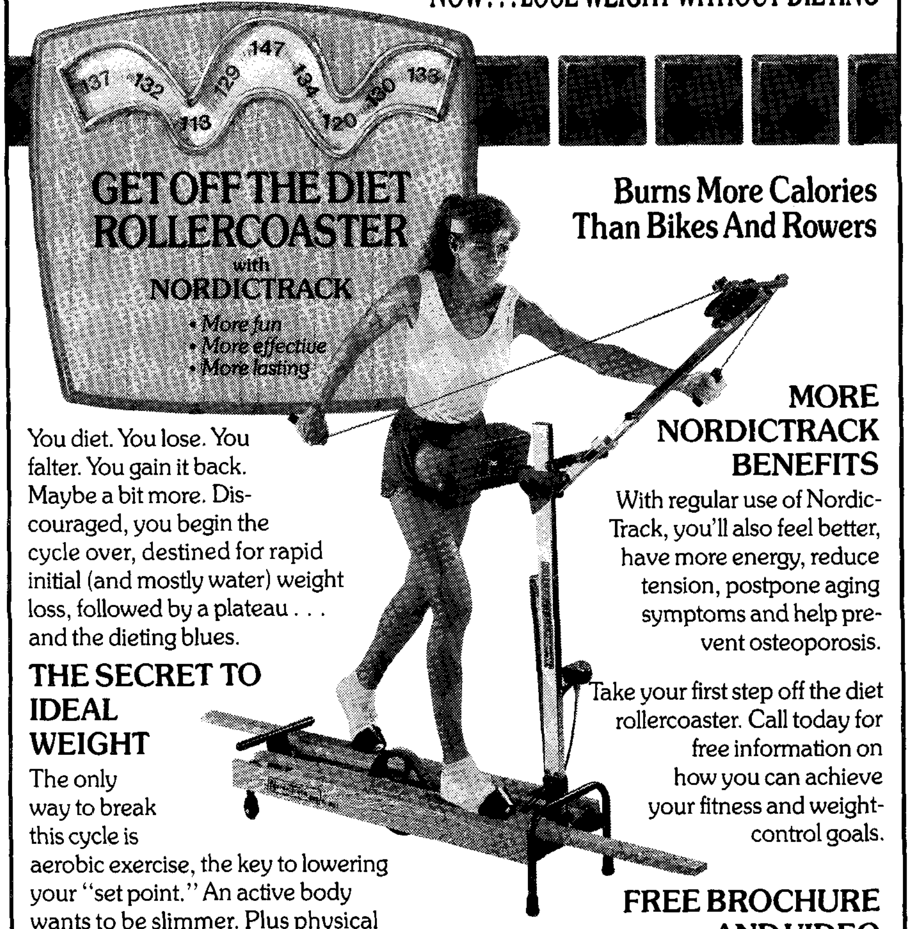
WE will have a hard time accepting this new state of affairs. Even the most far-seeing naturalists of an earlier day failed to comprehend that the atmosphere, the climate, could be dramatically altered. Thoreau, complaining about the logging that eventually destroyed almost every stand of virgin timber between the Atlantic and the Mississippi, said that soon the East "would be so bald that every man would have to grow whiskers to hide its nakedness, but, thank God, the sky was safe." And John Muir, the Scottish-born explorer of Yosemite, wrote one day in his diary, about following a herd of grazing sheep through the valley, "Thousands of feet trampling leaves and flowers, but in this mighty wilderness they seem but a feeble band, and a thousand gardens will escape their blighting touch. They cannot hurt the trees, though some of the seedlings suffer, and should the woolly locusts be greatly multiplied, as on account of dollar value they are likely to be, then the forests, too, may in time be destroyed. Only the sky will then be safe." George Perkins Marsh, the first modern environmentalist, who knew over a century ago that cutting down forests was a disastrous idea, wrote, "The revolutions of the seasons, with their alternations of temperature, and of length of day and night, the climate of different zones, and the general condition and movements of the atmosphere and the seas, depend upon causes for the most part cosmical, and, of course, wholly beyond our control."

Even as it dawns on us what we have done, there will be plenty of opportunity to forget—at least, for a while—that anything has changed. It isn't natural beauty that is ended; in the same way that smog breeds spectacular sunsets, there may be new, unimagined beauties. What will change is the meaning that beauty carries, for when we look at a sunset we see, or think we see, many things beyond a particular arrangement of orange and purple and rose.

It is also true that this is not the first huge rupture in the globe's history. Some thirty times since the earth formed, "planetesimals" at least ten miles in diameter and travelling at sixty times the speed of sound have crashed into the earth, releasing perhaps a thousand times as much energy as would be liberated by the explosion of all present stocks of nuclear weapons; such events, some scientists say, may have destroyed up to ninety per cent of all living organisms. Ice ages have come and gone. On a larger scale, the sun has steadily increased its brightness, growing nearly thirty per cent more luminous since life on earth began, forcing that life to keep forever scrambling to stay ahead (a race it will eventually lose, though not for some billions of years). Or consider an example more closely resembling the sharp divide we have now crossed. About two billion years ago, the spread of a particular kind of cyanobacteria caused, in short order, an increase in atmospheric oxygen from one part in a million to one part in five—that is, from one-ten-thousandth of a per cent to twenty-one per cent. Compared with that, the increase in carbon dioxide from two hundred and eighty to five hundred and sixty parts per million is as the hill behind my house to Annapurna. "This was by far the greatest pollution crisis the earth has ever endured," the microbiologist Lynn Margulis writes in "Microcosmos." Oxygen poisoned most microbial life, which, Margulis points out, "had no defense against this cataclysm except the standard way of DNA replication and duplication, gene transfer, and mutation." And, indeed, these adaptations produced the successful oxygen-utilizing life forms that now dominate the earth.

But each of these examples is different from what we now experience, for they were "natural," as opposed to man-made. A pint-size planet cracks into the earth; the ice advances and retreats; the sun, by the immutable laws of stars, burns brighter until its inevitable explosion; genetic mutation sets certain bacteria to spewing out oxygen until they dominate the planet—a strictly "natural" pollution.

One could argue that the current crisis, too, is "natural," since man is part of nature. This echoes the views of the early Greek philosophers who made no distinction between matter and consciousness: nature included everything. The British scientist James Lovelock wrote some years ago that "our species with its technology is simply an inevitable part of the natural scene"; that is, we are little more than mechanically advanced beavers. According to this view, to say that human beings have "ended" nature, or even damaged nature, makes no sense. But it is a debater's point, a semantic argument. When I say that we have ended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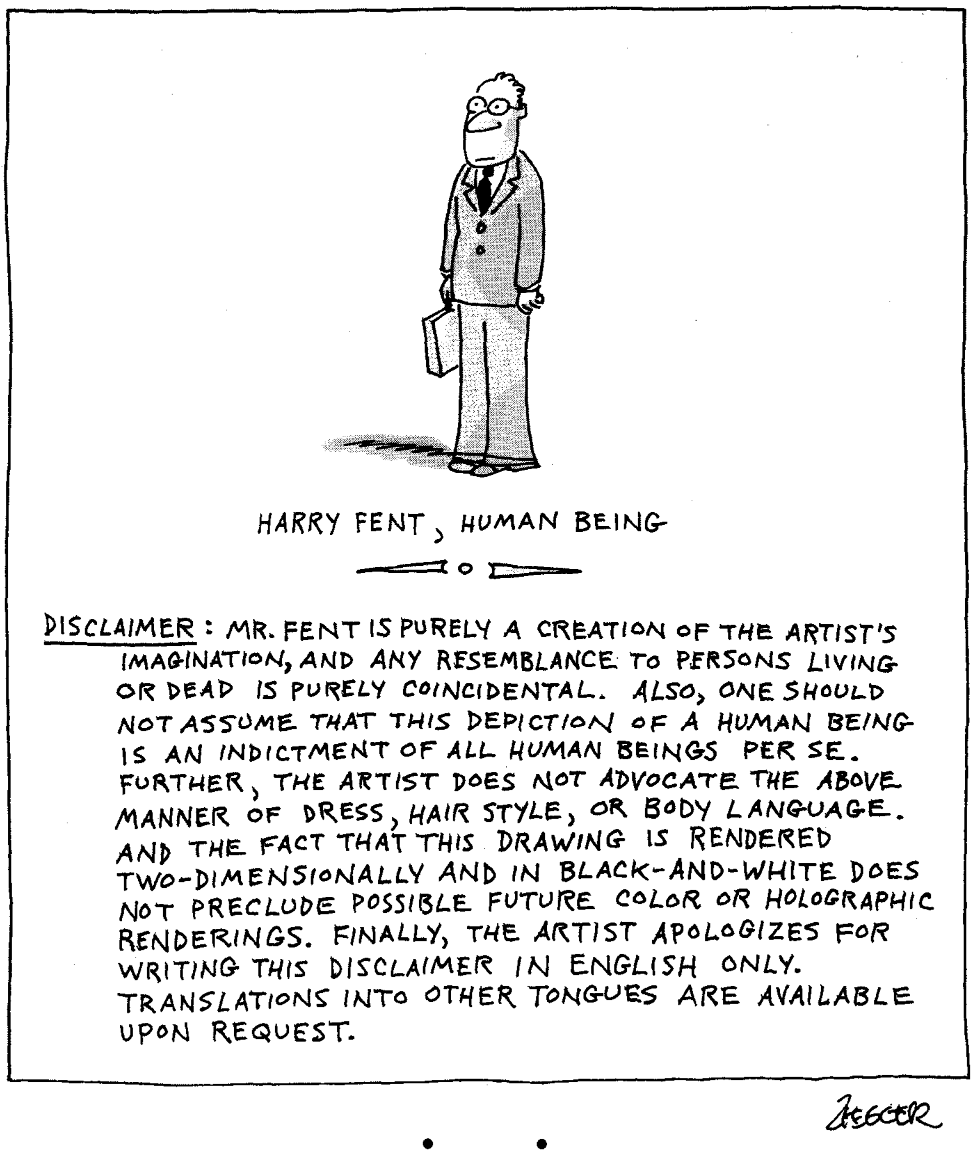
HARRY FENT, HUMAN BEING
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nature, I mean not that natural processes have ceased but that we have ended the thing that has—at least, in modern times—defined nature for us: its separation from human society.

That separation has been real. I sit writing here in my office. On the wall facing me is a shelf of reference books, and underneath them a typewriter and a computer. Visible through the window is a steep mountain, with nearly a mile of bare ridge and a pond almost at the peak. The mountain and the office are separate parts of my life; I do not think of them as connected. At night, it's dark out there; save for the street lamp by the lake, there's not a light for twenty miles to the west and thirty to the south. But in here the light shines. Its beams stretch a few yards into the night and then falter, turn to shadow and black. In the winter, it's cold out there, but in here the fire burns until near dawn, and when it dwindles the oil burner kicks in. What happens in here I control; what happens out there has always been the work of some independent force. It is this separate nature I am talking about when I use the word—"nature," if you like.

Scientists may argue that natural processes still rule, that the chemicals even now trapping the earth's reflected heat or eating away the ozone or acidifying the rain are proof that nature is still in charge—still our master. Some have talked about God as present in the interstices of the atom, or in the mysteries of quantum theory, or in the double helix of DNA and other bits of "information." To all but the few who really understand the math, though, this is a minor and secondhand comfort—an occult, esoteric knowledge. We draw our lessons from what we can see and feel and hear around us. The nature that matters is not the whirling fuzziness of electrons and quarks and neutrinos, which will continue unchanged; it is not the vast fields and fluxes that scientists can find with their telescopes. The nature that matters is the temperature, and the rain, and the leaves turning color on the maples, and the raccoons around the garbage can.

The invention of nuclear weapons may have marked the beginning of the end of nature; we possessed, finally, the ability to overmaster it, to leave an indelible imprint everywhere, all at once. "The nuclear peril is usually seen in isolation from the threats to other forms of life and their ecosystems, but in fact it should be seen as the very center of the ecological crisis—as the cloud-covered Everest of which the more immediate, visible kinds of harm to the environment are the mere foothills," Jonathan Schell wrote in "The Fate of the Earth." And, indeed, at the time he was writing—less than a decade ago—it was hard to conceive of a threat of the same magnitude. Global warming was one obscure theory among many; nuclear weapons were unique—and remain so, if only for the speed with which they work. But the nuclear dilemma is at least open to human reason. We can decide not to use the weapons—even to reduce and perhaps eliminate them. And the horrible power of these weapons, which has been amply demonstrated in Japan and on Bikini and under Nevada and many times in our imaginations, has led us fitfully in that hopeful direction.

By contrast, the various processes that lead to the end of nature have been essentially beyond human thought. Only a few people, for instance, knew that carbon dioxide would warm up the world, and for a long time they were unsuccessful in their efforts to alert the rest of us. Now it is too late—not too late (as I shall discuss) to ameliorate some of the changes, and so perhaps avoid the worst of their consequences. But a shift in weather is inevitable.

Just how inevitable we can see from the remedies that some scientists have proposed to save us—solutions that might bring things back to "normal." The most natural method anyone has suggested involves growing huge num-

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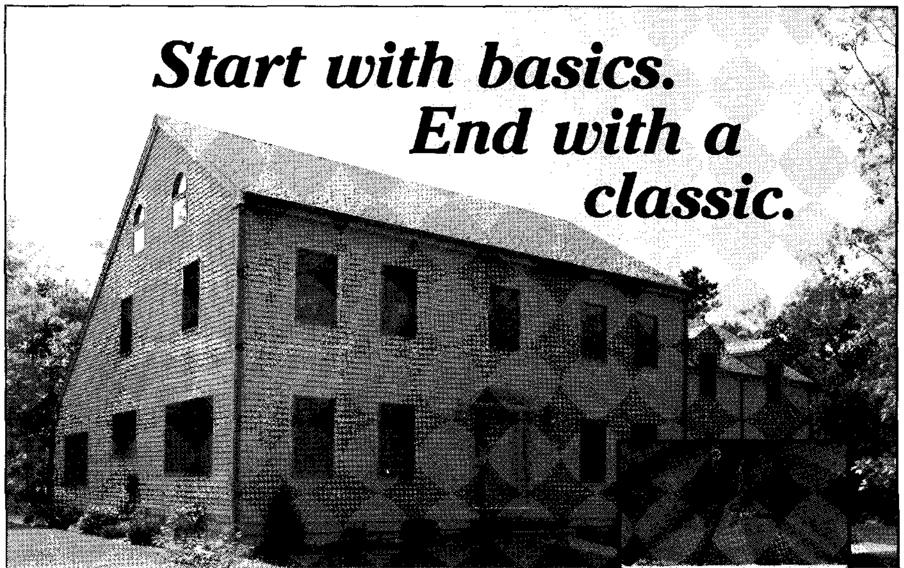

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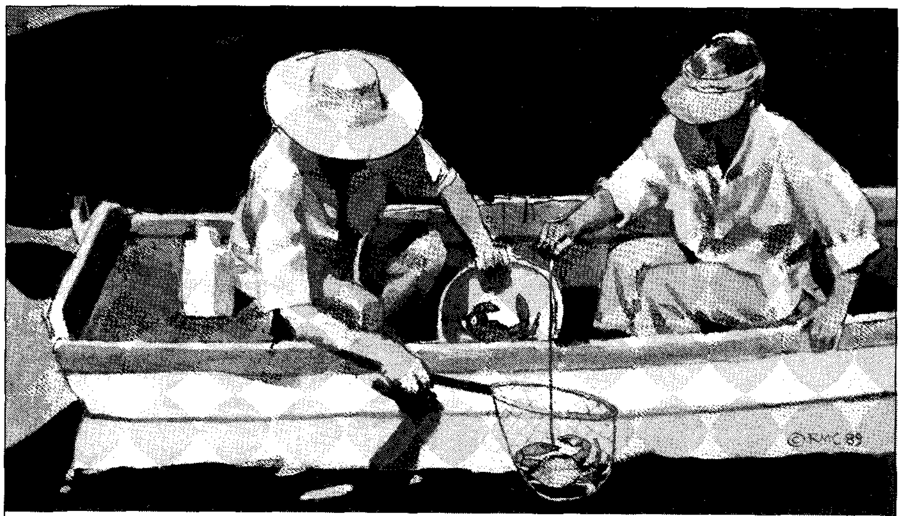

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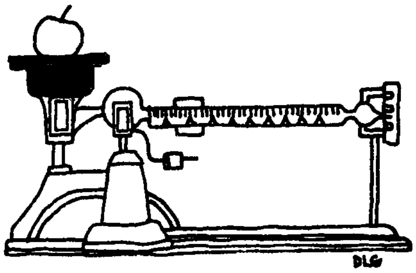
Other proposals are even odder. The Columbia geochemist Wallace Broecker has speculated about the use of "a fleet of several hundred jumbo jets" to ferry thirty-five million tons of sulfur dioxide into the stratosphere annually, in order to reflect sunlight away from the earth. Other scientists recommend launching "giant orbiting satellites made of thin films," which could cast shadows on the earth, counteracting the greenhouse effect with a sort of venetian-blind effect. To deal with ozone depletion, Dr. Thomas Stix, a professor of physics at Princeton, suggests using a laser to scrub chlorofluorocarbons from the earth's atmosphere before they have a chance to reach the ozone layer. Dr. Stix calculates that an array of infrared lasers spaced around the world could blast apart a million tons of chlorofluorocarbons a year—a procedure he refers to as "atmospheric processing." Certain practical problems may hamper these various projects; Dr. Broecker, for instance, points out that injecting large quantities of sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere would increase acid rain and give a pale cast to the blue sky. Still, one or another of them just might work. And perhaps, as Dr. Broecker contends, "a rational society needs some sort of insurance policy on how to maintain a habitable planet." But even if they do work—even if the planet remains habitable—it will not be the same. The whitish afternoon sky blessed by the geometric edge of the satellite cloud will fade into a dusk crisscrossed by lasers. There is no way to reassemble nature.

THE passing of nature as we have known it, like the passing of any large idea, will have its recognizable effects both immediately and over time. In 1893, when Frederick Jackson Turner announced to the American Historical Association that the frontier was closed, no one was aware that the frontier had been the defining force in American life. But in its absence this was understood. One reason we pay so little close attention to the separate natural world around us is that it has always been there and we have presumed that it always would be. As it disappears, its primal importance will become clearer, in the same way that some people think they have put their parents out of their lives, until the day comes to bury them.

Above all else, the world displays a lovely order, an order comforting in its intricacy. And the most appealing part of this harmony, perhaps, is its permanence—the sense that we are part of something with roots stretching back nearly forever and branches reaching forward just as far. Purely human life provides only a partial fulfillment of this desire for a kind of immortality. But the earth and all its processes—the sun growing plants; flesh feeding on these plants; flesh decaying to nourish more plants, to name just one cycle—give us some sense of an enduring role.

John Muir expressed this sense of immortality beautifully. Born to a stern Calvinist father, who used a belt to help him memorize the Bible, Muir eventually escaped to the woods, travelling to the Yosemite Valley of California's Sierra Nevada. The journal of his first summer there is filled with a breathless joy at the grandeur around him. Again and again in that Sierra June—"the greatest of all the months of my life"—he uses the word "immortality," and he uses it in a specific way, designed to contrast with his father's grim and selfish religion. Time ceases to have its normal meaning in those hills: "Another glorious Sierra day in which one seems to be dissolved and absorbed and sent pulsing onward we know not where. Life seems neither long nor short, and we take no more heed to save time or make haste than do the trees and stars. This is true freedom, a good practical sort of immortality." To someone in a mood like this, space is no more of a limitation than time: "We are now in the mountains and they are in us . . . making every nerve quiver, filling every pore and cell of us. Our flesh-and-bone tabernacle seems transparent as glass to the beauty about us, as if truly an inseparable part of it, thrilling with the air and trees, streams and rocks, in the waves of the sun—a part of all nature, neither old nor young, sick nor well, but immortal."



Some dim recognition that God and nature are interwined has led us to pay at least lip service to the idea of "stewardship" of the land. If there is a God, He probably does want us to take good care of the planet, but He may want something even more radical. The Old Testament contains in the book of Job one of the most far-reaching defenses ever written of wilderness—of nature free from the hand of man. The argument gets at the heart of what the loss of nature will mean to us. Job is, of course, a just and prosperous man brought low. He refuses to curse God, but he does demand a meeting with Him and an explanation of his misfortune. Job refuses to accept the reasoning of his orthodox friends—that he has unknowingly sinned and is therefore being punished. Their view—that the earth revolves around man, and every consequence is explained by man's actions—doesn't satisfy Job, because he knows he is innocent.

Finally, God arrives, a voice from the whirlwind. But instead of engaging in deep metaphysical discussion He talks at some length about nature, about creation. "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?" He asks. In an exquisite poem He lists His accomplishments, His pride in His creation always evident. Was Job there when He "put the sea behind closed doors"? Job was not; therefore, Job cannot hope to understand many mysteries, including why rain falls "on land where no one lives, to meet the needs of the lonely wastes and make grass sprout upon the ground."

"Behold now Behemoth," God roars. "He eateth grass as an ox. Lo now, his strength is in his loins. And his force is in the muscles of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar. . . . His bones are as tubes of brass. His limbs are like bars of iron. . . . Behold, if a river overflow he trembleth not. He is confident, though Jordan swell even to his mouth. Shall any take him when he is on the watch, or pierce through his nose with a snare?" The answer, clearly, is no: not all nature is ours to subdue.

Nature has provided a way for us to recognize God, and to talk about who He is—even, as in Job, a way for God to talk about who He is. So what will the end of nature as we have known it mean to our understanding of God and of man? For those of us who have tended to locate God in nature—who look upon spring, say, as a sign of His existence and a clue to His meaning—what does it mean that we have destroyed the old spring and replaced it with a new one, of our own devising? We as a race turn out to be stronger than we suspected—much stronger. In a sense, we turn out to be God's equal, or, at least, His rival—able to destroy creation. This idea has been building for a while. "We became less and less capable of seeing ourselves as small within creation, partly because we thought we could comprehend it statistically, but also because we were becoming creators, ourselves, of a mechanical creation by which we felt ourselves greatly magnified," the essayist Wendell Berry writes. "Why, after all, should one get excited about a mountain when one can see almost as far from the top of a building, much farther from an airplane, farther still from a space capsule?" And our nuclear weapons obviously created the possibility that we could exercise godlike powers. But the possibility is different from the fact. Though we seem to have recognized the implications of nuclear weapons and begun to back away from them, we have shown no such timidity in our wholesale alteration of nature. We are in charge now, like it or not. When God asks, as He does in Job, "Who shut in the sea with doors . . . and prescribed bounds for it?" and "Who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens?" we must now answer that it is us.

WITH this new power comes a deep sadness. I took a day's hike last fall, following the creek that runs by my door to the place where it crosses the main county road. It's a distance of maybe nine miles as the car flies, but rivers are far less efficient, and endlessly follow time-wasting, uneconomical meanders. The creek cuts some fancy figures, and so I was able to feel a bit exploratory—a budget Bob Marshall. In a strict sense, it wasn't much of an adventure. I stopped at the store for a liverwurst sandwich at lunchtime, the path was generally downhill, the temperature stuck at an equable fifty-five degrees, and since it was the week before the hunting season

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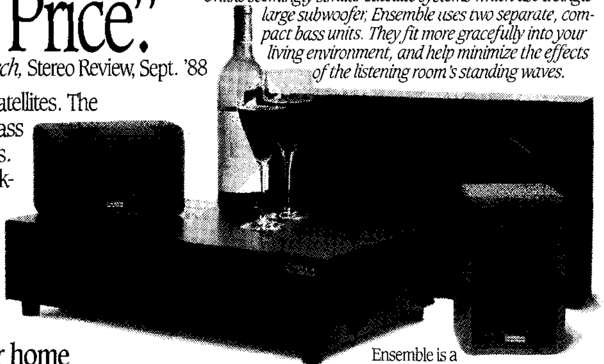

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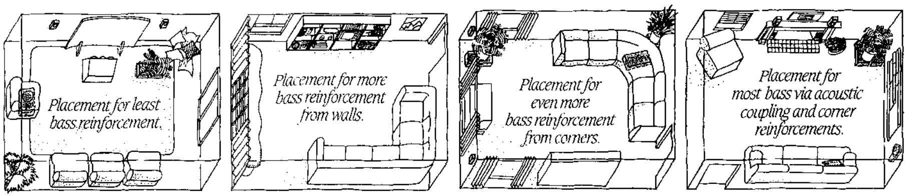

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opened I didn't have to sing as I walked. It isn't Yosemite, this small valley, but its beauties are absorbing, and one can say, with Muir on his mountaintop, "Up here all the world's prizes seem as nothing."

And so what if it isn't nature primeval? One of my neighbors has left several kitchen chairs along his stretch of the bank, spaced at fifty-yard intervals, for comfort in fishing. At one old homestead, a stone chimney stands at each end of a foundation now filled by a graceful birch. Near the one real waterfall, a lot of rusty pipe and collapsed concrete testifies to the mill that once stood there. But these aren't disturbing sights; they're almost comforting—reminders of the way that nature has endured and outlived and with dignity reclaimed so many schemes and disruptions of man. (A mile or so off the creek, there's a mine where a hundred and fifty years ago a visionary tried to extract pigment for paint and pack it out by mule and sledge. He rebuilt after a fire; finally, an avalanche convinced him. The path in is faint now, but his chimney, too, still stands, a small Angkor Wat of free enterprise.) Large sections of the area were once farmed; but the growing season is not much more than a hundred days in a good year, and the limits established by that higher authority were stronger than the (powerful) attempts of individual men to circumvent them, and so the farms returned to forest, with only a dump of ancient bottles or a section of stone wall as a memorial. These ruins are humbling sights, reminders of the negotiations with nature which have established the world as we know it.

Changing socks in front of the waterfall, I thought back to the spring of 1987, when a record snowfall melted in only a dozen or so warm April days. A little to the south, a swollen stream washed out a highway bridge, closing the New York Thruway for months. The creek became a river, and the waterfall, normally one of those diaphanous-veil affairs, turned into a cataract. It filled me with awe to stand there then, on the shaking ground, and think, This is what nature is capable of. But as I sat there this time, and thought about the dry summer we'd just come through, there was nothing awe-inspiring or instructive, or even lulling, in the fall of the water. It suddenly seemed less like a waterfall than like a spillway to accommodate the overflow of a reservoir. That didn't decrease its beauty, but it changed its meaning. It has begun, or will soon begin, to rain and snow when the chemicals we've injected into the atmosphere add up to rain or snow—when they make it hot enough over some tropical sea to form a cloud and send it this way. In one sense, I will have no more control over this process than I ever did. But the waterfall seemed different, and lonelier. Instead of a world where rain had an independent and mysterious existence, I was living in a world where rain was becoming a subset of human activity: a phenomenon like smog or commerce or the noise from the skidder towing logs on the nearby road—all things over which I had no control, either. The rain bore a brand: it was a steer, not a deer. And that was where the loneliness came from. There's nothing here except us.

At the same time that I felt lonely, though, I also felt crowded—without privacy. We go to the woods in part to escape. But now there is nothing except us, and so there is no escaping other people. As I walked in the autumn woods, I saw a lot of sick trees. With the conifers, I suspected acid rain. (At least I have the luxury of only suspecting; in too many places, they know.) And so who walked with me in the woods? Well, there were the presidents of the Midwestern utilities, who kept explaining why they had to burn coal to make electricity (cheaper, fiduciary responsibility, no *proof* it kills trees), and then there were the congressmen, who couldn't bring themselves to do anything about it (personally favor, but politics the art of compromise, very busy with the war on drugs), and before long the whole human race had arrived to explain its aspirations. We like to drive, it said, air-conditioning is a necessity nowadays, let's go to the mall. Of course, the person I was fleeing most fearfully was myself, for I drive, and I'm burning a collapsed barn behind the house next week because it is much the cheapest way to deal with it, and I live on about four hundred times the money that Thoreau conclusively proved was enough, so I've done my share to take this independent, eternal world and turn it into a science-fair project.

Our local shopping mall has a club of people who go "mall-walking" every day. They circle the shopping center en masse—Caldor to Sears to J. C. Penney, circuit after circuit, with an occasional break to shop. This seems less absurd to me now than it did at first. I like to walk in the outdoors not solely because the air is cleaner but also because outdoors we venture into a sphere larger than we are. Mall-walking involves too many other people, and too many purely human sights, ever to be more than good-natured exercise. But now, out in the wild, the sunshine on one's shoulders is a reminder that man has cracked the ozone, that, thanks to us, the atmosphere absorbs where once it released. The greenhouse effect is a more apt name than those who coined it can have imagined. The carbon dioxide and the other trace gases act like the panes of glass of a greenhouse—the analogy is accurate. But it's more than that. We have built a greenhouse—a human creation—where once there bloomed a sweet and wild garden.

A HURRICANE draws its might from the heat transferred to the atmosphere when ocean water evaporates. The warmer the ocean's surface, and the deeper beneath the surface the warm water runs, the more powerful the hurricane. If the sea turns cold a few metres down, the winds will soon churn up that frigid water, and the storm will brake itself. But if the warm water runs deep—and in the tropics it may extend down a hundred and fifty metres or more—the hurricane will continue to build. Under present conditions—tropical ocean-surface temperatures of about 80° F.—Hurricane Gilbert, which formed off the Windward Islands in September of 1988, approached what Kerry Emanuel, a professor of meteorology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has calculated to be the upper limit of intensity for a hurricane. The atmospheric pressure at its center dropped to about eight hundred and eighty-five millibars, and so its wind speed reached two hundred miles per hour. A hurricane can't get much worse than that—under present conditions. But a rise of three or four degrees in tropical sea-surface temperatures could raise the upper limit of hurricane strength. In the middle of these warmer storms, atmospheric pressure could fall to eight hundred millibars; as a result, the destructive potential of a hurricane would grow between forty and fifty per cent—a Gilbert and a half.

In the place of the old nature rears up a new "nature" of our own making. This new nature may not be predictably violent. It won't be predictably *anything*, and it will take us a long time to work out our relationship with it, if we ever do. The salient characteristic of this new nature is its unpredictability, just as the salient feature of the old nature was its utter dependabili-

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ty. We are used to thinking of the manifestations of nature—rain or sunshine, say—as devious, hard to predict. And over short time spans and for particular places they are. But on a larger scale nature has been quite constant, and on a global scale it has been a model of reliability.

Virtually all settlement patterns testify to the dependability of nature. Every year during the late summer, the Nile overflows its banks—or did until the Aswan Dam was built. A pilot knows how the air will behave along his flight path—that a tropical air mass in summer over the Southeast will breed thunderstorms. Even extreme events, weather emergencies, have been fairly predictable. Engineers calculate the ability of every drainage and wall to withstand the "hundred-year storm." Every developer who builds a resort along the coast, every underwriter who insures a ship or a plane does so with a conscious dependence on the reliability of nature. And even more dependent are those of us who rely unconsciously on nature's past performance. The farmer has always watched for rain, and sometimes his crops have shrivelled, but those of us who do our harvesting at the supermarket never doubt that enough rain will fall on enough farms, and always it has.

It is this very predictability that has allowed most of us in the Western world to forget about nature, or to assign it a new role, as a place for withdrawing from the cares of the human world. In some parts of the globe, nature has been more capricious, withholding the rain one year or two, pouring it down by the lakeful the next, and in those places people think about the weather—about nature—more than the rest of us do. But even in Bangladesh, say, people have known that for the most part nature would support them. We have had what Loren Eiseley called "an old contract, an old promise . . . that nature, in degree, is steadfast and continuous." And this promise has enabled life to establish itself even in places we think of as harsh, since they have been harsh in a fairly dependable way. That promise was long ago broken for passenger pigeons, and for the salmon who ran into dams on the ancestral streams, and for peregrine falcons, whose eggshells were so weakened by DDT that they couldn't reproduce. But now it is broken for us, too—nature's lifetime warranty has expired.

Even if our knack for some sort of adaptation proves hardy—and, after all, boat people moving from Cambodia to Canada experience a much more severe climatic shift than anything the scientists predict—the stress will be continuous, unrelenting, because no one knows how all this will turn out. It will undoubtedly be worst for those already living on the edge, already subject to nature's whim—out on the floodplains of Bangladesh. But it will affect, at the very least, the mind of each of us. We are not necessarily doomed to suffer some cataclysm, but we can no longer count on not being so doomed. Professor Emanuel points out that there is no certainty that an increase in global warmth will push up tropical ocean temperatures and thus hurricane strength; neither is there any certainty that it won't. The uncertainty itself is the first cataclysm, and perhaps the most profound. When we can't depend on enough snow falling to fill the reservoirs that feed our faucets, or when we have to worry about too much of that water evaporating in the heat, then the weather report is going to be leading off the evening newscasts.

In the summer of 1988, while America sweltered, scientists on the staff of the Environmental Protection Agency were finishing up the most comprehensive assessment yet made of the possible effects of the climate change. Congress had requested the study two years earlier, and the E.P.A. had done its work diligently, studying four regions in great detail and compiling most of the available literature on the subject. The authors of the report, which was entitled "The Potential Effects of Global Climate Change on the United States," inserted several caveats. "We have no experience with the rapid warming . . . projected to occur during the next century," they wrote. "We cannot simulate in a laboratory what will happen over the entire North American continent." And they added, with ominous modesty, "The results are also inherently limited by our imaginations. Until a severe event occurs such as the drought of 1988, we fail to recognize the close links between our society, the environment, and climate. For example, in this report we did not analyze or anticipate the reductions in barge shipments due to lower river levels, the increases in forest fires due to dry conditions, or the impacts on ducks due to disappearing prairie potholes."

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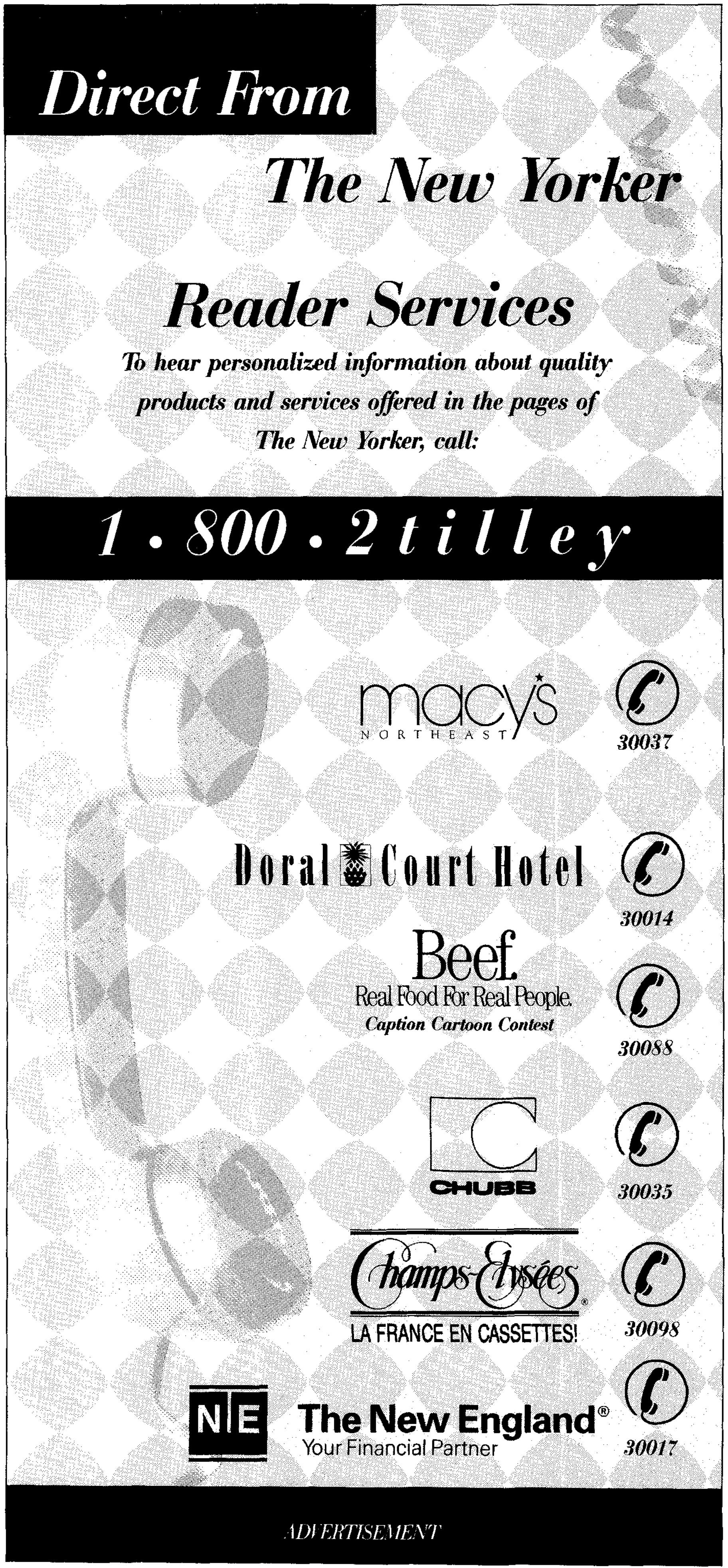
Let's look at that last, small item, "the impacts on ducks," for it sums up many of the lessons of this new, artificial nature. As the changes wrought by man have accelerated, so has the damage to other species. But there have been extensive efforts in recent years to save enough nature to accommodate at least some ducks (and bears and elk and eagles), and—to a certain degree, at least—these efforts have succeeded. In 1988, however, as ducks flew north in the summer they found very little water. Parts of North Dakota were ninety per cent dry, and one aerial survey of the Canadian prairie, Penny Ward Moser reported in *Sports Illustrated*, showed only seven of three hundred and thirty prairie potholes holding water. The potholes were a product of nature's slow pace: when the glaciers retreated from the northern Great Plains ten thousand years ago, they left pockmarks. Over the last hundred years or so, men have drained many of them, and the drought of 1988 emptied most of the rest. "The strongest of the early arrivals," Moser wrote of the ducks, "staked a claim, mated, and tried to raise a clutch in rapidly dwindling waters, surrounded by predators who congregated nearby, anticipating a summer-long feast." Some ducks took one look and decided to forget about mating; they spent the summer floating unproductively on larger lakes. Others flew farther north and arrived finally at usable habitat, but by then they were too protein-starved to produce eggs. Meanwhile, ducks that had found marshes to nest in, and had survived the lurking predators, began to contract botulism. In the warm and shallow water, it became an epidemic. Other ducks—many other ducks—died when the United States Department of Agriculture, in an attempt to aid drought-stricken farmers, released millions of acres of "set aside" and conservation land they had paid the farmers not to touch. As the tractors roared through, nests and ducks were mowed and baled along with the hay. Millions of fish were dying, too, as temperatures soared in streams and lakes and as lowering water levels made fish more vulnerable to pesticides. Moser, on the farm in northern Illinois where she grew up, wrote, "We see no great blue herons in our streams this summer. There are barely any streams at all. The muskrats' underwater tunnels are high in the banks above the water. . . . Hanging over a culvert along the road, we watch some minnows wriggle over mud shallows looking for a deeper pool. Then the minnows reverse direction, pushing over the mud again, back to where they had been. *This is* the deeper pool."

Nature has always provided, as the Cape Cod essayist Robert Finch put it, the "deep, constant rhythms," even if we have come to think that we are independent of its pulses. We still rely on the earth's "basic integrity and equanimity" to give us a "safe and stable context," Finch writes, and, in particular, we rely on the seasons. "The recurring cycles of the year . . . are not simply entertaining phenomena, to be noted at our convenience and for our enjoyment," he writes, "but signs that the cosmos is still intact, that we remain included in something larger and more reliable than our own short-lived enthusiasms. It is for this that we need to know that insects will hibernate, that turtles and warblers will migrate and return, that the tide will retreat, the ice let go, the earth tilt back toward the sun, and the grass reawaken." Despite dozens of new ways to look at the world—the genetic, the microscopic, the chemical—we are still very much the same people who built Stonehenge to make sure each year that the sun really did begin its retreat, the same people who trembled at eclipses. We need to be able to worry about our human affairs secure in our knowledge of the eternal inhuman. The certainty of nature—that God's creation or Darwin's or whoever's will provide for us, bountifully, as it always has—is what frees us to be fully human, to be more than gatherers of food.

THE single most talked-about consequence of a global warming is probably the expected rise in sea level as a result of polar melting. For the last several thousand years, sea level has



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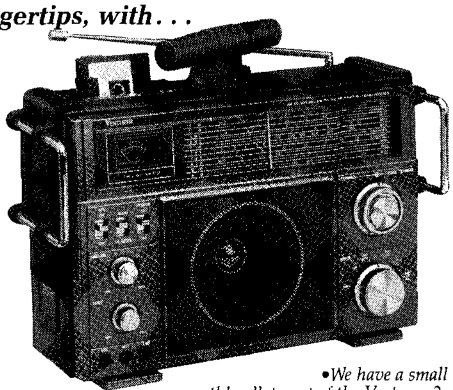
been rising, but so slowly that it has almost been a constant. In consequence, people have extensively developed the coastlines. But a hundred and twenty thousand years ago, during the previous interglacial period, sea level was twenty feet above the current level; at the height of the last ice age, when much of the world's water was frozen at the poles, sea level was three hundred feet below what it is now. Scientists estimate that the world's remaining ice cover contains enough water so that if it should all melt it would raise sea level more than two hundred and fifty feet. This potential inundation is stored in the Greenland Ice Sheet (if it melts, it will raise the world's oceans twenty-three feet), the West Antarctic Ice Sheet (another twenty-three feet), and East Antarctica (more than two hundred feet), with a smaller amount —perhaps half a metre—in the planet's alpine glaciers. (Melting the ice currently over water, such as the sea ice of the Arctic Ocean, won't raise sea level, any more than a melting ice cube overflows a gin-and-tonic.) The East Antarctic is relatively safe; the direst fears of a rising sea came as the result of a 1968 study concluding that the Ross and Filchner-Ronne ice shelves, which support the West Antarctic Ice Sheet, could disintegrate within forty years. Subsequent investigations, however, seem to have demonstrated that such a disintegration would take at least two centuries, and probably more like five (though several investigators have speculated that it might become irreversible within the next century).

But the salvation of the West Antarctic does not mean the salvation of Bangladesh, or even of East Hampton. A number of other factors may raise sea level significantly. Glaciers bordering the Gulf of Alaska, for example, have been melting for decades, and constitute a source of fresh water about the size of the entire Mississippi River system. And even if nothing at all melted, the increased heat would raise sea level considerably. Warm water takes up more space than cold water; this thermal expansion, given a global temperature increase of between one and a half and five and a half degrees Celsius, should raise sea level a foot, according to James Hansen. It is by now widely accepted that sea level will rise significantly over the next decades. The E.P.A. has estimated that it will rise between five and seven feet by 2100, and speculated about worst-case scenarios that might lead to an eleven-foot rise; the National Academy of Sciences has been more conservative; other researchers have turned in even scarier numbers. Suffice it to say that included in the range of guesses of almost every panel and scientist studying the problem is an increase in global sea level of better than three feet over the next century.

That may not sound like very much, but it means that the sea would reach a height unprecedented in the history of civilization. The immediate effects of the swollen sea would be seen in a place like the Maldives. By most accounts, this archipelago of eleven hundred and ninety small islands about four hundred miles southwest of Sri Lanka is fairly paradisal. Its residents had never heard a gun fired in anger until last year, when a short-lived coup attempt was mounted by foreign mercenaries. They survived the downturn in the coir business (coir is an elastic fibre made from coconut husks); breadfruit and citron trees are abundant. But most of this happy nation rises only two metres above the Indian Ocean. If sea level were to rise one metre, storm surges would become an enormous, crippling danger; were it to rise two metres—well within the range of possibilities predicted by many studies—the country would all but disappear. In October of 1987, the Maldivian President, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, went before the United Nations General Assembly. He described his country as "an endangered nation." The Maldivians, he pointed out, "did not contribute to the impending catastrophe . . . and alone we cannot save ourselves." A map drawn a hundred years from now may not show the Maldives at all, except as a danger to mariners.

Other nations, though not extinguished, would be very badly hurt. A two-metre rise in sea level would flood twenty per cent of the land in Bangladesh, much of which is built on the floodplains at the mouth of the Brahmaputra. In Egypt, such a rise would inundate less than one per cent of the land, but that area constitutes much of the Nile Delta, where most of the population lives. Nor is the danger only to the Third World. Several years ago, the E.P.A. distributed a worksheet to allow local governments to calculate their future position vis-à-vis the salt water. In Sandy Hook, New Jersey, for instance, add thirteen inches to the projected increase in sea level to account for local geologic subsidence, for a net ocean rise, in the next hundred years, of four feet one inch. In Massachusetts, between three thousand and ten thousand acres of oceanfront land worth between three billion and ten billion dollars might disappear by 2025, and that figure does not include land lost to encroaching ponds and bogs as the rising sea lifts the water table. But storm surges would do the most dramatic damage: in Galveston, Texas, ninety-four per cent of the land is within the plain that would be flooded by the worst storms. Such surges are the reason that Holland built many of its protective dikes. The most extensive barriers went up after the winter of 1953, when a surge breached the existing dikes in eighty-nine places along the central delta, killing nearly two thousand people and tens of thousands of cattle. Afterward, the Dutch decided to spend more than three billion dollars building new defenses.

As the Dutch effort indicates, much can be done to defend against increases in sea level. The literature abounds with studies of how much it would cost to protect coastal areas. The trouble is, spending the money to protect the shoreline would lead to ecological costs harder to calculate but easy to understand. Coastal marshes or wetlands exist in a nearly unbroken chain along the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts of the United States. Protected from the waves of the ocean by barrier islands or peninsulas, they are part land and part water, and are home to an abundance of plants and animals. They are more biologically productive than either the ocean or the dry land, in part because tidal flows spread food and flush out waste; it is a cycle that encourages quick growth and rapid decay. These communities support an immense variety of birds, fish, shellfish, and plants. Early settlers (with noble exceptions, like William Bartram) thought coastal marshes "miasmal," and drained or filled many of them. In recent years, federal and state authorities have grudgingly begun to protect them. As King Canute demonstrated, however, the ocean disregards governments, and as its level rises the area of the wetlands will dwindle. This is not axiomatic: if the marsh has room and time enough



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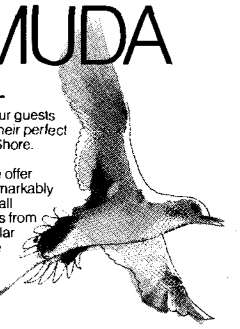

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to back up, it will, and the drowned wetland will be replaced by a new one. But, as another recent E.P.A. report pointed out, "in most areas . . . the slope above the marsh is steeper than the marsh; so a rise in sea level causes a net loss of marsh acreage." That is, in many cases the marsh will run into a cliff it can't climb. In a number of places, the cliffs will be man-made. If I have a house on Cape Cod, and my choice is to build a wall in front of it or let a marsh come in and colonize my basement, I will probably build the wall.

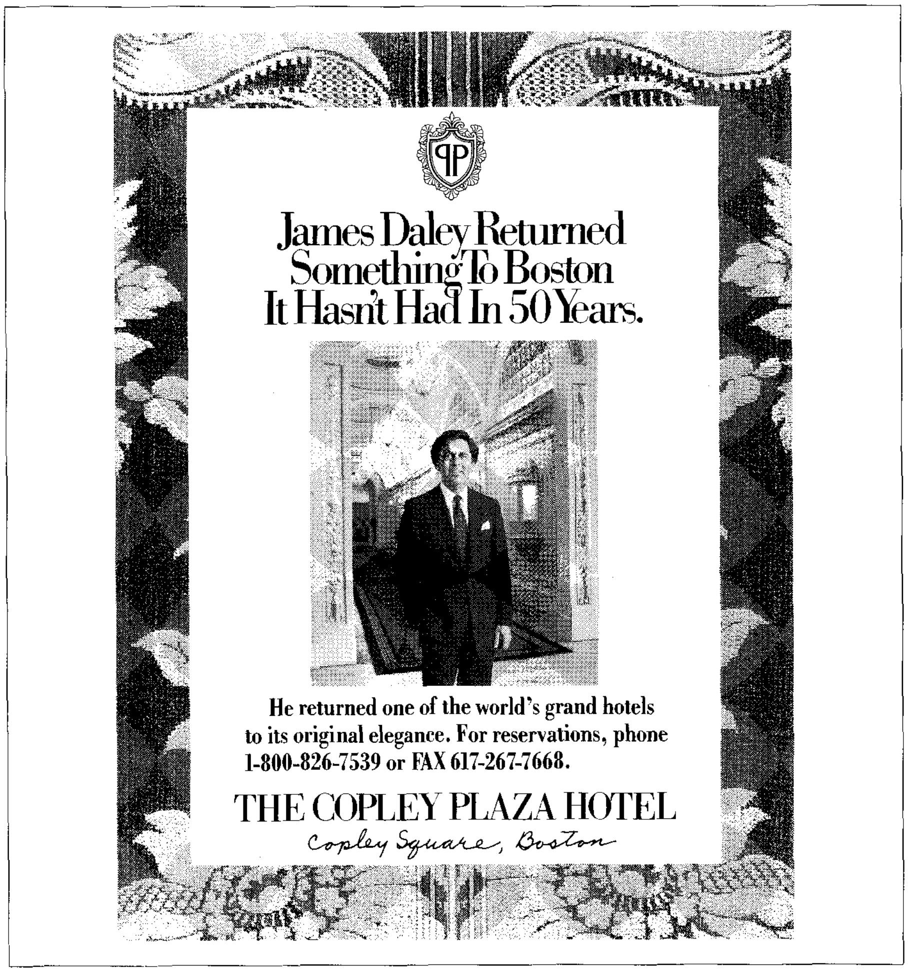
Should the ocean go up a metre, at least half the nation's coastal wetlands will be lost one way or another. "Most of today's wetland shorelines still would have wetlands," according to the E.P.A. report to Congress. "The strip would simply be narrower. By contrast, protecting all mainland areas would generally replace natural shorelines with bulkheads and levees." The relentlessly practical authors add that "this distinction is important because for many species of fish, the length of a wetland shoreline is more critical than the total area." It's also important if you are used to the idea of the ocean meeting the land with ease and grace instead of bumping into an endless concrete wall.

There are other reasons to fear a sea-level rise. In normal times, the water pouring out of a river pushes the ocean back. But in a drought the reduced flow creates a vacuum that the sea oozes in to fill. The "salt front" advances. In the drought of the nineteen-sixties, it nearly reached the point in the Delaware River where Philadelphia's water intake is located. During a drought, New York City must release vast quantities of water from its reservoirs on the upper Delaware to keep the salt front from creeping upriver. New Yorkers, however, continue to take showers and wash their hands. In the summer of 1985, city officials made up for the diminished flow from reservoirs by pumping water straight from the Hudson. This worked well—the water turned out to be considerably cleaner than many had expected—except that as the flow of the Hudson was reduced the salt front began to move up *that* river, and the town fathers of Poughkeepsie grew worried about *their* supply's getting salty. As the greenhouse warming kicks in, increased evaporation could steal from ten to twenty-four per cent of the water in New York's reservoirs, the E.P.A.'s 1988 report continues. In addition, a one-metre sea-level rise could push the salt front up past the city's water intake on the Hudson. In all, the report observes, "doubled carbon dioxide could produce a shortfall equal to twenty-eight to forty-two per cent of planned supply in the Hudson River Basin."

THE expected effects of sea-level rise typify the many other consequences of a global warming. On the one hand, they are of such magnitude that we can't grasp them. If there is significant polar melting, the earth's center of gravity will shift, tipping the globe in such a way that sea level might actually drop at Cape Horn and along the coast of Iceland. (I read this in the E.P.A. report and found that I didn't really know what it meant to tip the earth, though I was awed by the idea.) On the other hand, the changes ultimately acquire a quite personal dimension: Should I put a wall in front of my house? Does this taste salty to you? What's more, many of the various effects of the warming compound one another. If the weather grows hotter and I take more showers, more water must be diverted from the river, and the salt front moves upstream, and so on. The complications multiply almost endlessly (more air-conditioning means more power generated means more water sucked from the rivers to cool the generators means less water flowing downstream, et cetera ad infinitum). These aren't the simple complexities of, say, last summer, when everyone on the East Coast rushed to the beaches to escape the hot weather, only to discover a tide of syringes and fecal matter. These complexities are the result of throwing every single natural system into an uproar at the same time, so that none of nature's reliable compensations can be counted on. For example, at the same time that sea level is increasing, and the warmer air is gathering up more water vapor and presumably increasing the over-all precipitation, the temperature is continuing to go up. The result, the computer modellers say, will be greatly increased levels of evaporation; in many parts of the world, there will be a drier interior to complement the sodden coasts.

It's not simply a matter of heat. If the temperature rises, the number of days with snow cover will likely fall. When the snow-melting season ends, more of the sun's energy is absorbed by the ground instead of being reflected back to space, and, as a result, the soil begins to dry out. In the greenhouse world, this seasonal change will begin earlier, because the snow will melt faster. In some areas, other weather changes may offset the evaporation. Roger Revelle, of the Scripps Institution, has estimated that flows in the Niger, the Senegal, the Volta, the Blue Nile, the Mekong, and the Brahmaputra would increase—probably with disastrous results in the last two cases—whereas flows might diminish in the Hwang Ho, in China; the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, which run through the Soviet Union's principal agricultural areas; the Tigris-Euphrates system; and the Zambezi. The United States, as usual, has been most closely studied. America is blessed with ample water; on an average day, four trillion two hundred billion gallons of precipitation fall on the lower forty-eight states. Most of that water evaporates, leaving only about one trillion four hundred and thirty-five billion gallons a day, of which in 1985 only about three hundred and forty billion gallons a day were withdrawn for human use. It seems like more than enough. However, as anyone who has ever flown across the nation (and looked out the window) can attest, the water is not spread evenly. In its report to Congress, the E.P.A. notes that total water use exceeds average stream flow in twenty-four of the fifty-three Western water-resource regions, a difference made up by "mining" groundwater stocks and importing water. Much of the Colorado River's flow, for example, is dammed, diverted, and consumed by irrigation projects and by the millions upon millions of people living in places that would otherwise be too dry.

And matters may get worse. After studying the temperature and streamflow records, Revelle and the climatologist Paul Waggoner concluded that if a "conservative," two-degree-Celsius increase in temperature occurs, the virgin flow of the Colorado could fall by nearly a third; the same study predicts that if, as some of the computer models suggest, this temperature rise is accompanied by a ten-per-cent decrease in precipitation in the Southwest because of new weather patterns, runoff into the upper Colorado could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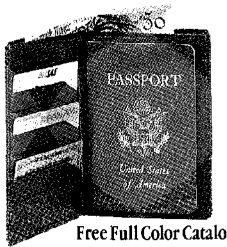

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fall by forty per cent. Even if rainfall went *up* ten per cent, the runoff would still drop by nearly twenty per cent. Across the West, the picture is similar: in the Missouri, Arkansas, lower-Colorado, and Rio Grande irrigation regions, supply could fall by more than half. In the Missouri, Rio Grande, and Colorado basins, the estimated water needs in the year 2000 could not be met by stream flows after the expected climatic changes. One model predicts a twenty-five-per-cent increase in the demand for irrigation water from the Ogallala Aquifer, the subterranean lake that irrigates the Great Plains and is already badly depleted.

A compelling question is what all this means for agriculture. The answer comes on several levels, the first being that of the individual plant. Quite apart from heat and drought, the simple increase of atmospheric carbon dioxide affects plants. Ninety per cent of the dry weight of a plant comes from the conversion of carbon dioxide into carbohydrates by photosynthesis. If nothing else limits a plant's growth—if it has plenty of sunshine, water, and nutrients—then increased carbon dioxide should increase the yield. And in ideal laboratory conditions this is what happens; as a result, some journalists have rhapsodized about "supercucumbers" and found other green linings to the cloud of greenhouse gases. But there are drawbacks. If some crops grow more quickly, farmers may need to buy more fertilizer, since leaves may become richer in carbon but poorer in nitrogen, reducing food quality not only for human beings but for nitrogen-craving insects, who may eat more leaf to get their fix. In the best case, direct effects of increased carbon dioxide on yield are expected to be small; the annual harvest of well-tended crops might rise about five per cent when the carbon-dioxide level reaches four hundred parts per million, all other things being equal.

But all other things won't be equal. All other things—moisture, temperature, growing season—will be different. It is an obvious point, but worth repeating: most of what we eat spends its growing life in the open air, "exposed," in the words of Paul Waggoner, "to the annual lottery of the weather." About fifty million acres of America's cropland and rangeland are irrigated, but even those fields depend on the weather over any long stretch. And we can't just stick the wheat crop under glass.

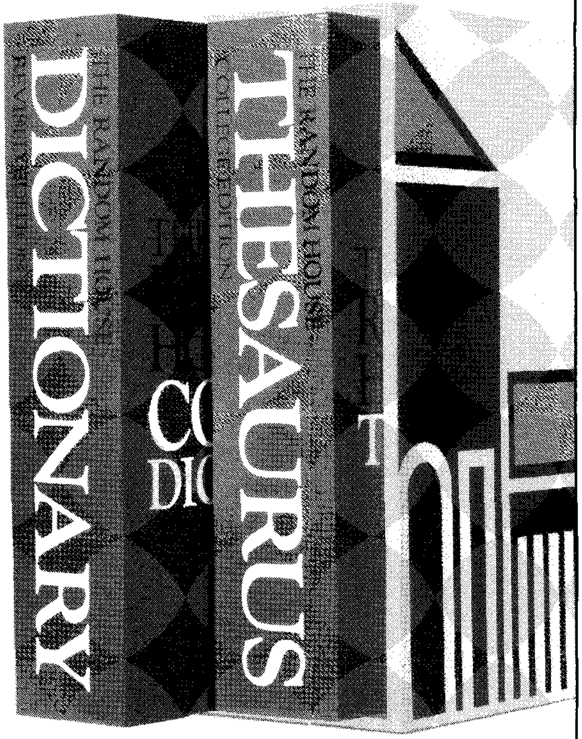
It is a tricky business trying to predict what changes in the weather will do to crops. A longer growing season—the period between killing frosts—surely helps; a lack of moisture surely hurts. If temperatures stay warm, plants grow nicely. If temperatures get really hot, they wither. (A long stretch above ninety-five degrees Fahrenheit, for instance, can sterilize corn.) The climate models are too crude to project with any precision what will happen in a given area, and too many variables make even the broadest predictions difficult. The severe droughts of the Dust Bowl years provide scant guidance: on the one hand, the technological revolution in agriculture has tripled yields since then, but on the other, as a government report notes, "the economic robustness associated with general multiple-enterprise farms has long since passed from the scene on any significant scale," and therefore "the current vulnerability of our agricultural system to climate change may be greater in some ways than in the past." Most of the experts have simply thrown up their hands. The best guesses seem to be that the northern reaches of the Soviet Union and Canada will be able to grow more food and the Great Plains of the United States less—not so little that America couldn't feed itself but enough below present production so that United States food exports, which earn the country some forty billion dollars in a good year, might fall by seventy per cent. "It has been suggested," Stephen Schneider told the Senate energy committee last year, "that a future with soil-moisture change . . . would translate to a loss of comparative advantage of United States agricultural products on the world market"—a sentence to make an economist shiver on an August day.

This sounds like somewhat comforting news—as if we would still have enough to eat—but when computers are modelling something as complex as all of agriculture the potential for error is enormous (or the potential for accuracy is small). The effect of the heat and drought of 1988 made liars of most of the computer models in just a few weeks. They had concluded that the expected doubling of carbon dioxide in several decades might make the weather hot and dry enough to cut American corn and soybean yields as much as twenty-seven per cent, but in the summer of 1988, when the rains held off, the American corn crop fell thirty per cent—down by about two and a half billion bushels.

Even if, as seems likely, that heat wave had little to do with the greenhouse effect, we now have some idea what it will feel like once it is here. As of late August, the grain stored around the world amounted to only about two hundred and eighteen million metric tons—enough to last forty-seven days, and the lowest level since 1973. Worldwide consumption of grain outpaced worldwide production by sixty million metric tons last year. You can live with a budget deficit for quite a while, but when the food runs out there's no central bank to mint some more.

The thing to remember is that all these changes may be happening at once. It's hotter, and it's drier, and sea level is rising as fast as food prices, and hurricanes are strengthening, and so on. And not least is the simple fact of daily life in a hotter climate. The American summer of 1988, when no one talked about anything but the heat and how soon it would end, was only a degree or two warmer, on average, than what we were used to. But the models predict that summers could eventually be five or six or seven degrees warmer than the old "normal." Science has yet to devise a way of determining what percentage of people feel like human beings on any given August afternoon, or the number of work hours lost to the third cold bath of the day—or, for that matter, the loss of wit and civility in a population concerned mainly with keeping its shirts dry. These are important matters, and a future full of summers like that one is a grim prospect. Summer will come to mean something different—not the carefree season anymore but a time to grit one's teeth and get through. To anyone who lived through the 1988 heat it seems unlikely that people will simply get used to it.

A certain number of people who didn't get used to the heat died of it. Public-health researchers have correlated mortality and temperature tables. When the weather gets hot, they find,



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preterm births and perinatal deaths both rise. Mortality from heart disease goes up during heat waves, and emphysema gets worse. If, the E.P.A. notes, in its 1988 report to Congress, "climate change encourages a transition from forest to grassland in some areas, grass pollens could increase," worsening hay fever and asthma. "A variety of other U.S. diseases indicate a sensitivity to changes in weather," the report continues. "Higher humidity may increase the incidence and severity of fungal skin diseases (such as ringworm and athlete's foot), and yeast infections (candidiasis). Studies on soldiers stationed in Vietnam during the war indicated that outpatient visits for skin diseases (the largest single cause of outpatient visits) were directly correlated to increases in humidity."

That last sentence suggests that a useful place to look for information about American weather might be Vietnam. There is nothing wrong with the Vietnamese climate—it is not "better" or "worse" than the various American climates, or the weather in Britain, or the cold of Canada. And people have been able to move back and forth between all these zones, adapting to conditions. In fact, we often want to—a change of climate is perhaps the single biggest inducement to travel. But now the climate is travelling. A recent United Nations study estimates that sometime in the next century the climate of Finland will have become similar to that of northern Germany, that of southern Saskatchewan to northern Nebraska, of the Leningrad region to the western Ukraine, of the central Urals to central Norway, of Hokkaido to northern Honshu, and of Iceland to northeast Scotland. If we felt like keeping the weather we're accustomed to, it's we who would have to move, travelling north ahead of the heat.

The list of miscellaneous circumstances that might result from changes in the atmosphere looks to be infinite. In New York City, the heat of the summer of 1988 softened asphalt and caused thousands of "hummocks"—potholes in reverse—in the streets. "When it's over ninety degrees for a prolonged period of time, the problem is virtually out of control," Lucius Riccio, of the New York City Bureau of Highway Operations, told the *Times*. Steel expansion joints buckled along Interstate 66 around Washington, D.C., during the heat wave, and a hundred and sixty people were injured when a train derailed in Montana, apparently because the heat warped the rails. Coupled with the physical predictions are endless political and financial conjectures. Francis Bretherton, of the National Center for Atmospheric Research, told *Time* that if the Great Plains became a dust bowl and people followed the seasonable temperatures north, Canada might replace the United States as the Western superpower.

This game swings from the specific to the wildly speculative. There is no easy way to say that something can't happen or is unlikely to happen; forecasts have to be based on the past, and there is no longer a relevant past. Jesse Ausubel, the director of programs at the National Academy of Engineers, told *Fortune* that it "may become difficult to find a site for a dam or an airport or a public transportation system or anything designed to last thirty to forty years," and asked, "What do you do when the past is no longer a guide to the future?" We are left with a vast collection of "mights," and only one certainty: we have changed the world, and therefore some of the "mights" are inevitable. I find myself thinking often of some purple-martin chicks that Penny Moser found "cooked to death" near her Illinois farm in 1988's heat. This was an actual event and also a metaphor. The heat will cook the eggs of birds, and that destruction—and the hurricanes and the rising sea and the dying forests—will rob us of our sense of security. That the temperature had never reached a hundred degrees at the airport in Glens Falls, the city nearest my home, made it a decent bet that it never would. And then, in July of 1988, it did. There is no good reason anymore to say that it won't reach a hundred and ten degrees. The old planet is a different planet. There is no reason to feel secure, because there is no reason to be secure.

LAST summer, I paddled across a northern Adirondack lake with a state biologist to visit an eagle's nest. Thirty years before, in an effort to curb black flies, communities in this area put big blocks of DDT in the streams. The black flies survived (they hung in clouds around us the whole morning), but the eagles, among others, didn't.

The chemical thinned the shells of their eggs; when the mother eagles sat on the eggs, the shells collapsed. Finally, last year, three pairs of eagles returned to the Adirondacks and built nests. We sat in the canoe and watched a big eagle circle above us with patient irritation, head ruffled. His mate was on the nest, and we were too close. He swooped nearby; we backed off; he rose with a beat or two of his six-foot wingspan and flew for the nest. When he got there, he flared his wings, stalled, and dropped softly down.

Had Rachel Carson not written when she did about the dangers of DDT, it might well have been too late by the time anyone cared about what was happening. She pointed out the problem; she offered a solution; the world shifted course. That is how this discussion should end, too. At this writing, the greenhouse effect shows every sign of becoming an important political issue. President George Bush has called for an international scientific workshop on the subject; there is talk of drawing up an international treaty on climate change modelled on the recent international accords to phase out production of chlorofluorocarbons. It all sounds promisingly rational. We ought to come up with a good practical response, a plan, a series of steps, a seven-point proposal to offset the greenhouse effect. That is our reflex. The minute the scientists at the June, 1988, congressional hearings finished explaining that we were heating up the earth, senators began talking about nuclear power; it was literally their first reaction. Senator Frank Murkowski, of Alaska, asked, "Is it indeed a reality that we must look more aggressively to nuclear as a release? Because I don't see the public demanding any reduction in the power requirements that our air-conditioners run off of, everything else that we enjoy." Not even the senator from Alaska can imagine life without air-conditioning, so we must come up with some solution, and fast. But is nuclear power a solution? Lay aside the questions of whether it's safe and what we will do with the resulting waste (though it is a sign of the depth of our addiction that we would be willing to lay aside such considerations). Nuclear energy is, at the moment and for the foreseeable future, useful for generating electricity but not for, say, powering my Honda. We may well need to

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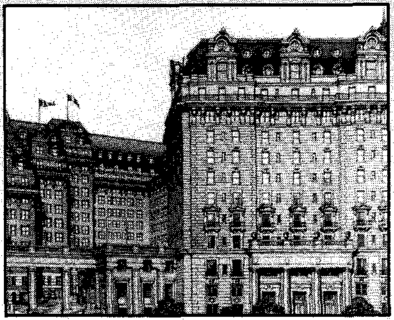

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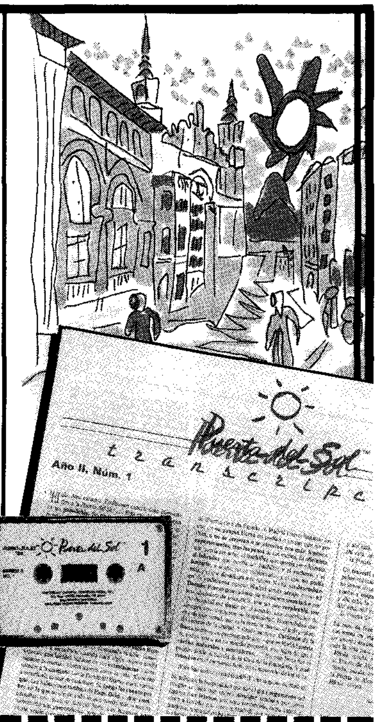

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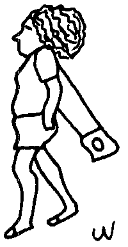
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

swallow our fears about safety and build more reactors, but doing so won't make everything all right. Returning to the same mix of natural gas and coal that America used in 1973 could save as much carbon dioxide as expanding nuclear power fifty per cent. And we have no spare decades in which to build more Shorehams and Seabrooks; putting off the solution twenty or thirty or forty years would give us thirty or forty or sixty more parts per million of carbon dioxide.

But what about increasing efficiency—what about conservation? There is—no question—waste, even sixteen years after the energy crisis. For example, most of the electricity consumed by industry is used to drive motors; companies, anticipating expansion, tend to buy larger motors than they need; however, large motors are inefficient when they run at less than full speed. The latest edition of the *World Resources* yearbook estimates that if every industrial motor in the United States were to be equipped with available speed-control technology America's total electricity consumption would fall seven per cent. We must end waste, the sooner the better. But will this kind of action *solve* the problem? Consider a few numbers supplied by Irving Mintzer, of the World Resources Institute. He describes a "base case" scenario that "reflects conventional wisdom in its assumptions about technological change, economic growth, and the evolution of the global energy system." In this model, nations do not enact policies to slow carbon-dioxide emissions, nor do they provide more than minimal support for increased energy efficiency and solar research and development, though they do slow the rate of chlorofluorocarbon production. The result is an average global warming of up to 4.7°F. by the year 2000, and of up to 8.5°F. by 2030. This, Mintzer says, "is by no means the worst possible outcome." If the use of coal and synthetic fuels is encouraged, and tropical deforestation continues to increase, the planet would be doomed to an increase of up to 12.6°F. by 2030, and, by 2075, to a nearly thirty-degree jump—a level with implications too sci-fi for us to imagine. The good news, such as it is, concerns Mintzer's "slow buildup scenario." In this one, strong international efforts to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions "eventually stabilize the atmosphere's composition." Coal, gas, and oil prices are markedly increased, per-capita energy use declines in industrialized countries, and governments actively pursue the development of solar energy. The world embarks on "massive" reforestation efforts. And so on. If all these heroic efforts had begun in 1980, by 2075 we would experience a warming of between 2.5°F. and 7.6°F., which is still "greater than any experienced during recorded human history."

Carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases come from everywhere, so the situation they create can be fixed only by fixing everything. Small substitutions and quick fixes are not the answer. One common suggestion is to replace much of the coal and oil we burn with methane, since it produces considerably less carbon dioxide. But, as I have noted, any methane that escapes unburned into the atmosphere traps solar radiation twenty times as efficiently as carbon dioxide does. And methane does leak—from wells, from pipelines, from appliances; some estimates suggest that as much as three per cent of the natural gas tapped in this country escapes unburned. So converting from oil to natural gas might make the situation worse. The size and complexity of the industrial system we have built makes even small course corrections physically difficult.

Not only is that system huge but the trend toward growth is incredibly powerful. At the simplest level—population—the increase continues, if not unabated, then only slightly abated. In some of the developing countries, thirty-seven per cent of the population is under fifteen years of age; in Africa, the figure is forty-five per cent. Without a static population, even the most immediate and obvious goals, like slowing deforestation or reducing fossil-fuel use, seem far-fetched. Over the last century, a human life has become a machine for burning petroleum. At least in the West, the system that produces excess carbon dioxide is not only huge and growing but also psychologically all-encompassing. It makes no sense to talk about cars and power plants and so on as if they were something apart from our lives—they *are* our lives. Moreover, for any program to be a success we must act not



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only as individuals and as nations but as a community of nations. The trouble is, though, that some countries may perceive themselves to be potential winners in a climatic change. The Russians may decide that the chance of increased harvests from a longer growing season is worth the risk of global warming. And the United States, the Soviet Union, and China own about two-thirds of the world's coal reserves, so any one of them can scuttle progress. The possibilities of other divisions—rich nations versus poor nations, say—are large. Every country has its own forms of despoliation to protect; the Canadians, for instance, who complain loudly about their position as helpless victims of American acid rain, are cutting down the virgin forests of British Columbia at an almost Brazilian pace. And the fact that decisions must be made now for the decades ahead means that, in the words of Richard Benedick, our Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Environment, Health, and Natural Resources, "somehow, political leaders and government processes and budget-makers must accustom themselves to a new way of thinking." Of all the quixotic ideas discussed here, that may top the list.

The greenhouse effect is often compared to the destruction of the ozone layer, another example of atmospheric pollution with global implications. But the destruction of the ozone layer can and likely will be solved by our ceasing to produce the chemicals currently destroying it. Though this step won't end the problem overnight, it will take care of it eventually. And, though the necessary international negotiations may be complex, steps like this are easy enough so that they will certainly be taken. Essentially, it's like controlling DDT. The problem of global warming, however, does not yield to the same sort of solution. With aggressive action—as Mintzer's numbers indicate—we can "stabilize" the situation at a level that is only mildly horrific, but we cannot solve it.

This is not to say that we should not act. We must act, and in every way possible, and immediately. We stand at the end of an era—the hundred years' binge of oil, gas, and coal which has given us both the comforts and the predicament of the moment. Even those countries which wouldn't object to a degree or two of warming for a longer growing season can't endure endless heating. The choice of doing nothing—of continuing to burn ever more oil and gas and coal—is not a choice. It will lead us, if not straight to hell, then straight to a place with a comparable temperature. But even the scientists calling most vociferously for controls on emissions say they are doing so in order to slow down the warming so that we can adapt to it. That adaptation is all that remains to be discussed.

ADJUSTMENT to the greenhouse world will not be easy; our addiction to oil is deep. Our every comfort—especially the freedom from hard labor, for those of us who enjoy such freedom—depends on fossil fuels. They allowed us to dominate the earth, instead of letting the earth dominate us. Our impulse will be to adapt not ourselves but the earth—to figure out a new way to continue our domination, and hence our accustomed life styles, our hopes for our children. This defiance is our reflex. Our impulse will be to defy the doomsayers and press ahead into a new world.

The futurist Julian Simon has infuriated environmentalists by predicting that before we ran out of anything essential, scientists would discover new ways to produce it; if we started to run out of copper, say, we would find out how to make it from other metals. In a 1981 book called "The Ultimate Resource," he writes that with knowledge, imagination, and enterprise "we can manipulate the elements in such fashion that we can have all the mineral raw materials that we need and desire at prices ever smaller relative to other prices and to our total incomes. In short, our cornucopia is the human mind and heart."

This is not a scientific treatise—Simon has not discovered how to produce copper from other metals. It is, despite its reliance on "long-run economic indicators" and such, a religious argument, an article of faith. "The main fuel to speed our progress is our stock of knowledge, and the brake is our lack of imagination," he writes. "To have more children grow up is also to have more people who can find ways to avert catastrophe." The religiosity of this view can be seen as well in books like "The Hopeful Future," of 1983, whose author, G. Harry Stine, argues that to make predictions based on current rates of growth and prog-

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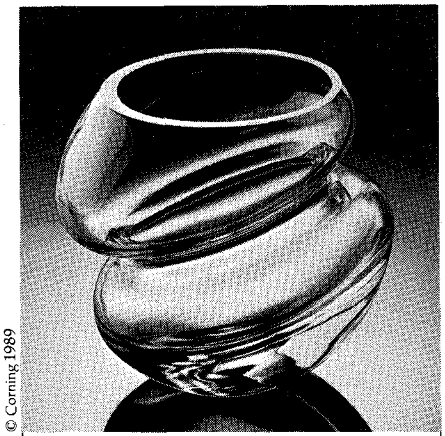

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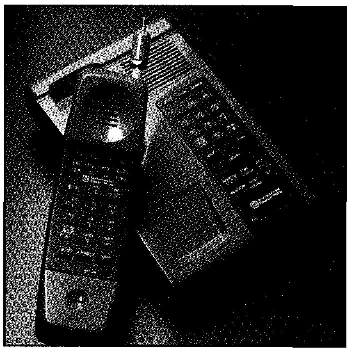

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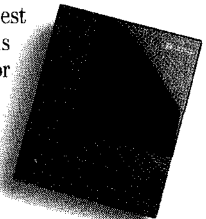

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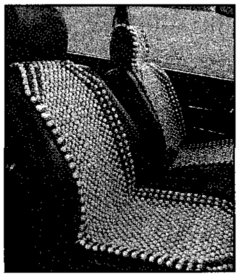

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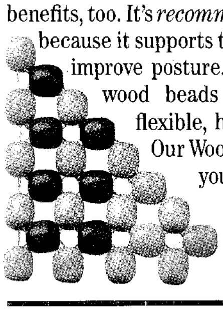

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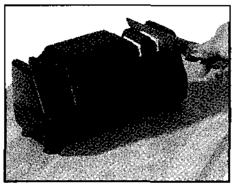

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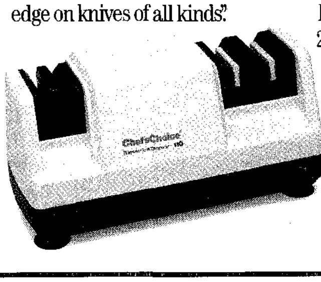

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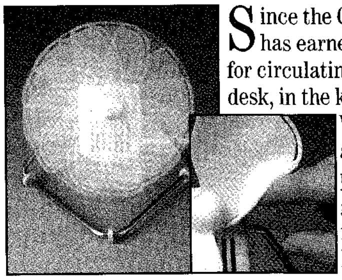

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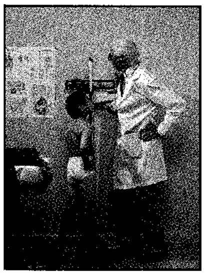

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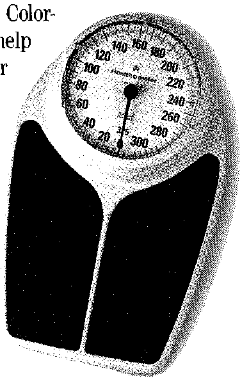

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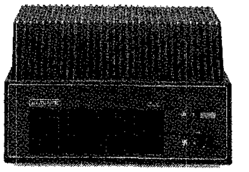

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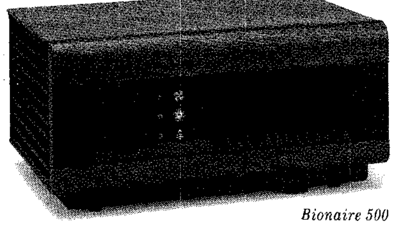

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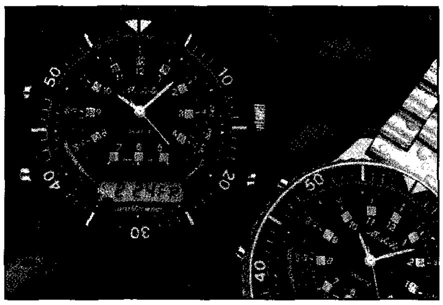

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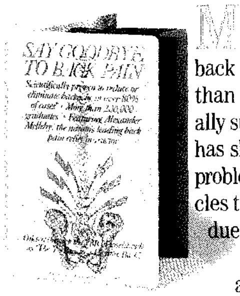

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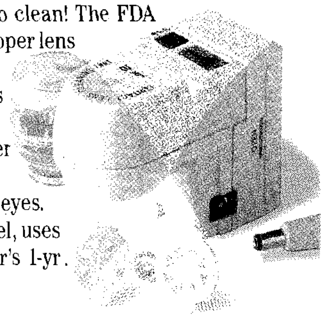

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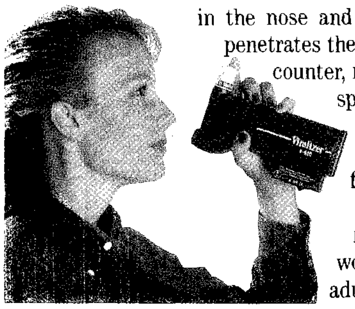

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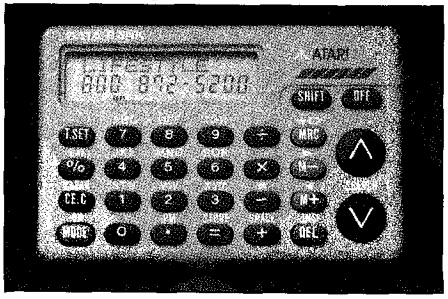

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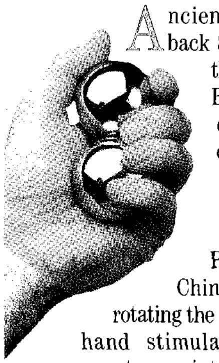

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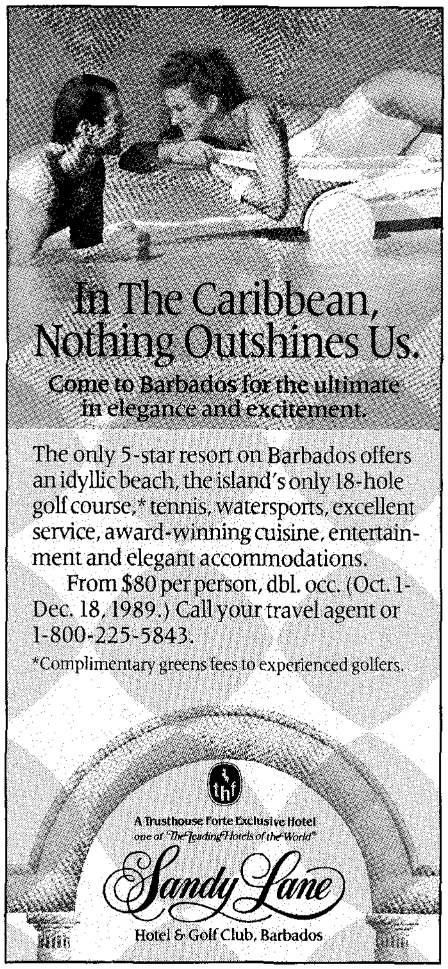
ress is absurd. Even a curve that shows the rate of human progress as increasing from its present mind-boggling pace is too conservative. Only “Curve E,” a “cubic curve that continues to turn upward ever more steeply with no limit in sight,” makes sense. “It means that we can expect eight times as much progress in the next fifty years as we have seen in the past fifty,” he says. This is not, strictly speaking, blind faith; the optimists can explain their reasoning. But it is faith, and it comes with other religious trappings—a dark view of people who think differently, for instance. (“Some of the ‘futurists’ making ‘downside’ forecasts don’t like people. That means they don’t like themselves either,” Stine chides.) And there is a vision of a not too distant utopia. In the twenty-first century, Stine writes, enormous orbiting satellites will beam down “enough energy for everybody to do everything.”

I am not dismissing the futurists. On the contrary, I think it possible that they are right: we can keep progressing, even in the teeth of the greenhouse effect. We will invent new tools, new technologies, to keep ourselves alive on the planet. We will figure out ways to extend our control so far that not even the rogue nature we have inadvertently created in our last century of progress will escape our domination. I can imagine scenarios—a nuclear war, for instance—that would cancel this future. But my guess is that the defiant optimists are likely correct in their assertion that we can have a “macromanaged” world—one that may well allow us to continue our ways of life even in the face of the coming heat. People with sincere and “progressive” ideas about man’s future profess their hope for such a world. Buckminster Fuller is probably the great example. He was not an enemy of the environment; his geodesic domes, for instance, are as stable as conventional buildings, at about three per cent of the weight. Were we all to live in them, there would be a lot more forests standing.

He was not an enemy of the environment, but he was a champion of man. “We have to deal with our spaceship, Earth, as a machine, which is what it is,” he wrote in “Approaching the Benign Environment.” I doubt whether Fuller would have viewed the end of nature with much trepidation, for he never believed that we would or should stay long in the surroundings we had grown accustomed to. Instead, we were like a chick in a shell. This shell had just enough food in it—enough coal and oil and oxygen and whatever—to allow us to develop to a certain point. “But then, by design, the nutriment is exhausted just at the time when the chick is large enough to be able to locomote on its own legs,” he wrote. “And so as the chick pecks at the shell seeking more nutriment it inadvertently breaks open the shell.” The analogy is somewhat selfish—that there are other species in the shell with us seems not to have crossed his mind—but it may well be correct.

As a mild example of our hubris, consider a recent book: “Gaia—An Atlas of Planet Management.” Despite this title, it does not, I think, reflect fully the Gaia hypothesis, which was first outlined by James Lovelock in the nineteen-seventies; namely, that the earth is a self-sustaining, self-regulating organism. Instead, it argues that man should take ever more control of the planet. Its editor, Norman Myers, seems almost thrilled by the current state of affairs. The approaching crises represent “our final evolutionary examination.” We must rise to the occasion, pass the test. And we will: “We are grown up. We have acquired the power of life and death for our planet and most of its inhabitants. . . . Our ‘satellite vision’ means that all the planet’s resources—soils, forests, rivers, oceans, minerals—can be not only mapped in fine detail, but vetted for pollution, erosion, or drought; for changes in albedo or humidity . . . for movements of shoaling fish and migratory creatures.” We can process this data at high speed in our computers; we can communicate it around the world instantly. And we can act on it. “With the power of life in our hands, we could, for instance, make forests spring up on bare lands, safeguard species against the pressures for extinction.” It is time for us, “as incipient planet managers,” to “use this power and use it well,” Myers goes on. “The ancient Greeks, the Renaissance communities, the founders of America, the Victorians, enjoyed no such challenge as this. What a time to be alive!” The physician Lewis Thomas is



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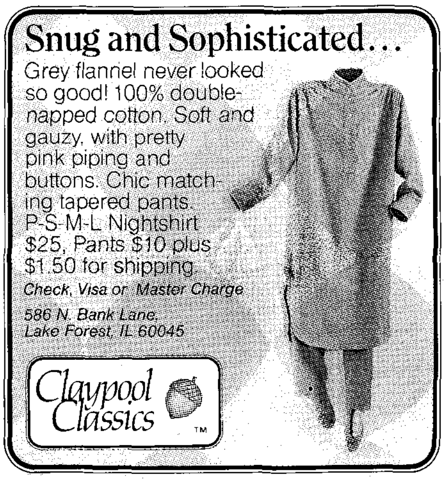

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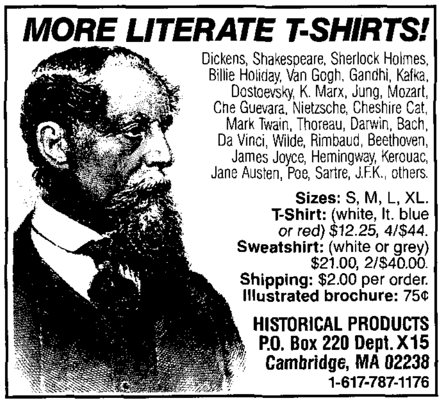

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quoted as saying that if we succeed "we could become a sort of collective mind for the earth."

This is the defiant reflex, cloaked in a filmy veil of New Age ecological thinking. Many of the proposals of the planet managers are sound—the usual suggestions of environmentalists. In the world we have created, they may offer us our only chance. But the planet managers have respect mostly for man: they understand that the current methods of domination will overheat the planet, but they have new and improved methods. In their forests of the future, cloned Douglas firs and American sycamores will "sprout like mushrooms," growing straighter, producing "denser wood." Almost all wildlife can be "harvested" from preserves, so that "conservation and profit can go hand-in-hand." Even at its most far-reaching, though, "macromanagement" remains a fairly crude enterprise. You may be able to keep track of fish by satellite, but they are still wild creatures, growing at their own pace. The next step—the step we stand about to take—is much more radical.

THE first time I gave much thought to biotechnology, I was a young reporter covering the weekly meetings of the city council of Cambridge, Massachusetts. For several years, the councillors debated how to regulate the genetic-engineering work then under way at Harvard and M.I.T. Week after week, Nobel Prize winners and brilliant young researchers would arrive at the meetings to answer questions; their biggest doubter was Alfred E. Vellucci, the councillor from Italian and Portuguese East Cambridge, who would long ago have won a Nobel himself if only they were awarded for local politics. Gifted with a strong imagination, Vellucci conjured up countless possible ways for "these bugs," the reprogrammed organisms, to be accidentally released. Could they escape through the sewers? The air-conditioning? On the soles of people's shoes? Eventually, and over the protests of the universities, the city enacted fairly strict regulations governing "containment"—the thickness of laboratory doors, and so on. I remember thinking that gene-splicing was something like nuclear power—potentially useful, albeit risky. It didn't occur to me then

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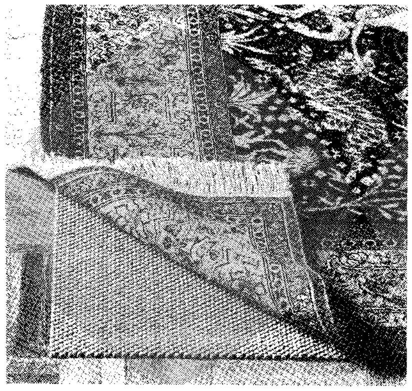

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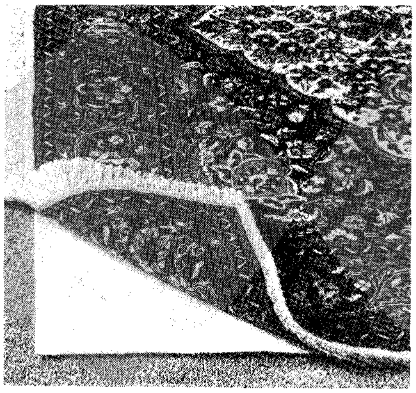

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to think much more deeply about it.

But genetic engineering is the first way to create new life. It is a staggering idea—"the second big bang," as one biologist put it. Just in time—just as the clouds of carbon dioxide threaten to heat the atmosphere—we are figuring out a new method of domination, a method more thorough, and therefore more promising, than burning coal and oil and natural gas. It is the method that offers us the most hope of continuing our way of life, our economic growth. It promises crops that need little water and can survive the heat; it promises cures for the new ailments we are creating as well as the old ones we have yet to defeat; it promises a way to survive in almost any environment we may create.

And for this reason it is without a doubt the most important scientific advance ever, in conceptual and moral terms. When I say "moral," I am not thinking primarily of the uses to which such technology might be put—eugenics, for instance. I am thinking of the very fact of the technology. The environmental lobbyist Jeremy Rifkin, who has emerged as one of the few vigorous opponents of genetic engineering, says that for thousands of years human beings have lived "pyrotechnically," burning, melting, mixing inanimate materials—coal, say, or iron. We have worked from the outside in, to alter our environment. Now we are starting to work from the inside out, and that changes everything. Everything except the driving force, the endless desire to master our planet. The British writer Brian Stableford declares in his celebratory book "Future Man" that genetic engineering "will eventually enable us to turn the working of all living things on earth—the entire biosphere—to the particular advantage of our own species." No clearer and crisper definition exists of what I have been calling "defiance."

Watson and Crick described the double helix of DNA in 1953. Just twenty years later, Stanley Cohen, of Stanford, and Herbert Boyer, of the University of California at San Francisco, took two unrelated organisms and cut out a piece of DNA from each. They knit the pieces together, and when they were done they had a new form of life, a kind of life that had not existed five minutes before. In 1981, scientists from the University of Ohio and from Jackson Laboratory, in Bar Harbor, Maine, transferred a gene that controlled the manufacture of part of the hemoglobin in rabbits to a mouse embryo, which they brought to term. The mouse was not exactly a mouse; it had a functioning rabbit gene, which it passed on to subsequent generations. This proof of the possibility of blends between unrelated species was soon followed by others. English researchers crossed a goat and a sheep, two animals that wouldn't dream of mating in the barnyard (or, if they did—for dreams are widespread—nothing would come of it). At the University of Pennsylvania, biologists managed to insert human growth-hormone genes in the fetus of a mouse. After it was born, the mouse grew twice as fast as other mice and to twice their size. Having passed the gene on to its offspring, it made forever moot the question "Are you a man or a mouse?" These mice are both, and neither.

By the end of 1988, according to a tally in the *Times*, there were more than a thousand different strains of such "transgenic" mice, as well as twelve breeds of pig and several varieties of rabbits and fish. In the spring of that year, two Harvard researchers announced the creation of a mouse that was genetically altered to develop cancer, so that oncologists could use it for studying new treatments. Unlike the earlier inventions, this mouse had commercial possibilities and was awarded the nation's first animal patent. The patent was licensed to Du Pont, and the mice will go on sale this fall, for fifty dollars apiece.

Even these mice, though, will be confined to laboratories (until they escape). A bigger barrier probably fell in April of 1987, when workers from a company called Advanced Genetic Sciences released the first genetically altered bacteria to the great outdoors—in a strawberry field in Brentwood, California. Trademarked Frostban, the bacteria—*Pseudomonas syringae* and *Pseudomonas fluorescens*—lacked an "ice-nucleating gene" in their DNA and were designed to prevent crop losses from frost damage. Environmental activists had ripped up many of the strawberry plants in an attempt to delay the test, but it was an empty gesture. A few days later, Steven Lindow, the man who discovered the operative gene, sprayed Frostban bacteria on a field of potato plants in Tule Lake, California, without any interference.

The pace of this revolution keeps speeding up. Genetically "improved" trees, for instance, already exist. A Seattle company selects "élite" redwoods from its wild stands, on the basis of such qualities as trunk straightness, height, "specific gravity" of the wood, and "proper branch drop." Then it clones the trees and plants the seedlings; eventually, gnarly, crooked trees will be gone from its stands. Classical methods of improving seeds do not "adequately satisfy the criteria of the rapid availability of trees of superior quality," according to a 1982 report by Congress's Office of Technology Assessment. Christmas-tree growers are now attempting to clone trees with branches that rise at the proper forty-five-degree angle and carry thick needles that "do not fall off to litter the living room floor." A company called Calgene has isolated a gene that gives tobacco plants some resistance to the herbicide glyphosate. The herbicide works by blocking a pathway in plants that synthesizes aromatic amino acids; once the tobacco plants have been genetically retuned, however, you can spray the herbicide on the surrounding weeds without hurting the tobacco.

The future—the fairly near future—holds much more, at least according to the most fanciful accounts. In his book, Brian Stableford promises that the "battery chickens" of tomorrow will look very different from the birds of the moment, and in fact the accompanying illustration shows them looking rather like hunks of flesh. This is because we may be able to design chickens without the unnecessary heads, wings, and tails. "Nutrients would be pumped in and wastes pumped out through tubes connected to the body," Stableford says. Perhaps we could "grow" lamb chops on an "infinite production line, with red meat and fat attached to an ever-elongating spine of bone." Eventually, all plants might "become unnecessary," having been replaced by artificial leaves that would waste none of the sunlight they received on such luxuries as roots but instead would employ "the energy they trap to make things for us to use."

And then there's us. What about

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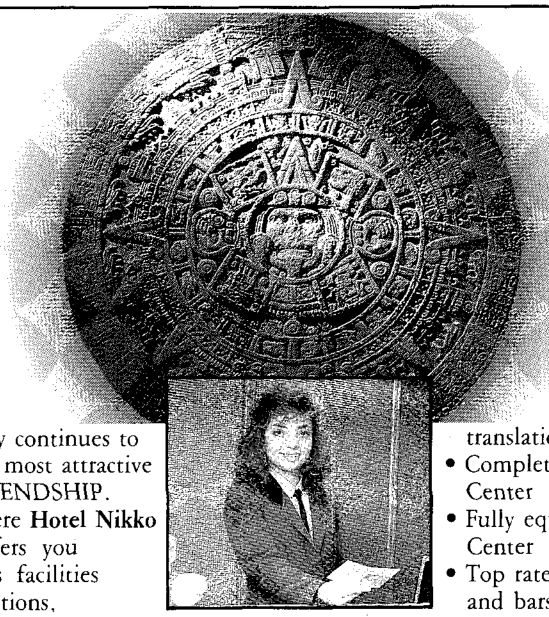

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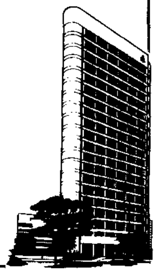

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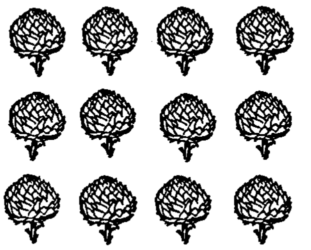

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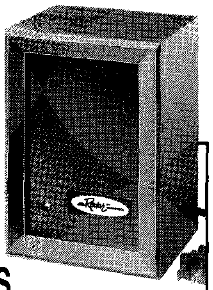

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night vision, or sonar (although, Stableford says, "this would involve whole new anatomical structures being added to the head"), or double-glazed eyes for living in space, or the "very minor modification" that would allow us to digest cellulose? These developments, though in the future (and farther in the future, I would guess, than these authors predict), are not conceptually different from what we have begun to do in the last twenty years, and what we have started to do in a large way in the last two years. The line is not in the distance; the line is here and now, and we shall very soon be on the other side, if we're not there already. And on the other side of the line is the second end of nature.

Some people tend not to worry very much about genetic engineering or other such developments, because they think of them as extensions of traditional practices—selective breeding, for example. But nature put definite limits on such activities. Mendel could cross two peas, but he couldn't cross a pea with a pine, much less with a pig, much less with a person. We could pen up chickens in batteries, but they still had heads. Our understanding of the natural limits helped define nature in our minds. Such notions will quickly become quaint. The idea that nature—that *anything*—could be defined will soon be outdated. Because anything can be changed. A rabbit may be a rabbit for the moment, but tomorrow "rabbit" will have no meaning. "Rabbit" will be a few strands of genetic code, no more important than a set of plans for a 1940 Ford. Why not make a rabbit more like a dog, or a duck? Whatever suits us. In such a world, nothing will be impossible—including, perhaps, immortality. Why die? (Why age?) Whether eternal life will have any meaning is another matter. "Eventually," Stableford says, "there may well be a complete breakdown in the distinction between the living and the non-living: the boundary between the two will be blurred and filled in by systems which involve both the machinery of life and the machinery of metal, plastic, and glass."

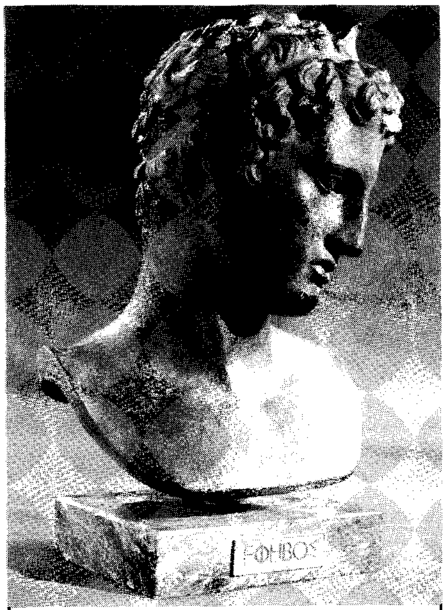
All this is speculation, certainly. No one can say with any exactness what will result from a development as awesome as the cracking of the gene. But if that technology falters some other may emerge. It is the logical outcome of our belief that we must forever dominate the world to our advantage. The problem, in other words, is not simply that burning oil releases carbon dioxide, which happens, by virtue of its molecular structure, to trap the sun's heat. The problem is that nature, the independent force that has surrounded us since our earliest days, cannot coexist with our numbers and our habits. We may well be able to create a world that can support our numbers and our habits, but it will be an artificial world—a space station.

Or, just possibly, we could change our habits.

ONE very small example of an idea so large as to be unwieldy: To cope with the greenhouse world, people in the developed countries will probably begin to install much more energy-efficient washing machines. That would reduce somewhat the amount of carbon dioxide each of us puffs into the atmosphere. But what if, instead, people got together with their neighbors and agreed to buy a single washing machine for the entire block (not such a novel concept to people in big-city apartment houses)? And what if they also decided that instead of continually buying fashionable clothes they would reduce their wardrobes to a comfortable, or even uncomfortable, minimum? What if, in other words, we began to reject a pervasive individual consumerism, and began to alter a basic way we look at ourselves? Mightn't such a path, broadened to include other facets of daily life, offer the best way not only to avoid overheating the planet but also to keep from transforming it in the other sad ways I have discussed?

As long as the desire for endless material advancement drives us, there is no way to set limits. We are unlikely to develop genetic engineering to eradicate disease and then not use it to manufacture perfectly efficient chickens; there is nothing in the logic of our beliefs that would lead us to draw that line. If there is one item that virtually all successful politicians on earth—socialist and fascist and capitalist—agree on, it is that "economic growth" is good, necessary, the proper end of organized human activity.

Our present environmental troubles, though, just might give us the chance to change the way we think. Spurred by the realization of what we have done, we might begin to think and then



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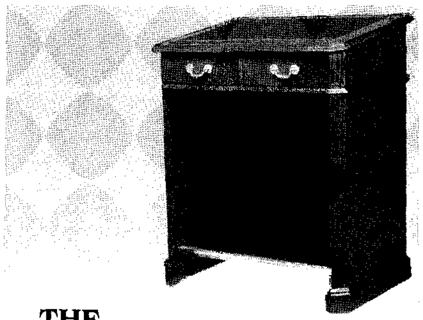

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behave more humbly. As the effects of man's domination have become clearer in recent years, a new idea has begun to spread, both in America and abroad. Some environmentalists have begun to talk of two approaches to the world: the traditional anthropocentric view, and the biocentric vision of mankind as just another part of the world. This concept is foreign to most of us. My first sense of what it might mean came a couple of summers ago in Idaho, when I was camped next to a man who hikes almost every year from Mexico to Canada. A dozen times, he told me, he had met grizzly bears, the grandest mammals left on the continent: "The last one, he stood on his hind legs, clicked his jaws, woofed three times. I was too close to him, and he was just letting me know. Another one, he circled me about forty feet away and wouldn't look me in the eye. When you get that close, you realize you're part of the food chain."

The idea that man doesn't necessarily belong at the top—that the hierarchy we've spent many thousands of years establishing is dangerous to other species and also to ourselves—is a strange and powerful idea. The few philosophers and environmentalists interested in such a Copernican shift have taken to calling this alternative path "deep ecology"—as opposed to the "shallow ecology" of conventional environmentalism, which seeks merely to turn mankind into better stewards. Deep ecology suggests that instead of just giving better orders we learn to give fewer and fewer orders—to sink back into the natural world. Deep ecologists question the industrial basis of our civilization, the need to forever grow in wealth and numbers, the entire way we live. We should, they say, work toward a smaller world population—half the current one, maybe, or even less. And we should lay aside our desire for material advancement in favor of "doing with enough."

Such ideas are not blueprints; they aren't even outlines. But they are at least a starting point for those who seek to save a world fast vanishing. They are radical ideas, but we live at a radical moment. We live at the end of nature, the instant when the essential character of the world is changing. If our way of life is ending nature, it is not radical to talk about transforming our way of life. When I climb the hill out back, I often pause on a ledge from

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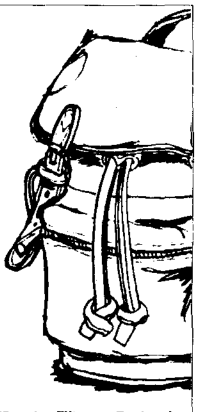

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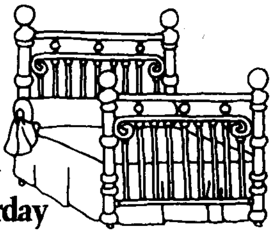

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which I can see my house—the car in the driveway, the chimney above the stove. I love the life that that house represents, love it very much. But I love the hemlocks around me on the hill, too, and the coyotes, and the deer. And it seems that either that life down there must change or the life up here around me will change—the trees will wilt in the sun or else sprout in perfect, heat-tolerant, genetically improved rows.

Exactly what a humbler world would look like I cannot say. We are used to planning utopias, worlds engineered for human happiness. But this would be something different—an "atopia," perhaps, where the integrity of the planet, and not our desires, would be the engine. If our thinking changed, the details would follow of their own accord. Perhaps we might all begin to use the "appropriate technology" of "sustainable development" which we urge on Third World peasants—solar cookstoves, or bicycle-powered pumps. Probably many more of us would be growing our own food. Such solutions are not beyond our imagination. When we decided that accumulation and growth were our economic ideals, we invented wills and lending at interest and puritanism and supersonic aircraft. Why would we come up with ideas less powerful in an all-out race to do with less?

The difficulty in accomplishing this transformation is almost certainly more psychological than intellectual—less that we can't figure out major alterations in our way of life than that we don't want to. The people whose lives may point the way—Thoreau, say, or Gandhi—we dismiss as exceptional, a polite way of saying that there is no reason we should be expected to go where they pointed. The challenge they presented with the example of their lives is much more subversive than anything they wrote or said, for if they could live that simply it's no use saying we couldn't. And maybe now we should—not just for moral or aesthetic reasons but for reasons of chemistry and physics.

Such a change would obviously be colossally difficult. For one thing, while we as individuals would have to change our habits, it would mean very little—save as a good gesture—for any one of us to, say, drive less. *Most* people have to be persuaded to drive less, and persuaded quickly; this is the first environmental crisis one can't escape by heading for the woods. It's also difficult for us to turn our backs on the idea of economic growth, because it has been sold as the answer to the poverty that afflicts most of the planet. For example, S. Fred Singer, the greenhouse skeptic, writes, "Drastically limiting the emission of carbon dioxide means cutting deeply into global energy use. But limiting economic growth condemns the poor, especially in the Third World, to continued poverty, if not outright starvation." I am sometimes dubious about the actual depth of feeling for the Third World such arguments imply; they mesh too conveniently with our desires. An overheated, ozone-depleted world would probably be crueller to the poor than to the rich, and if our desire is to alleviate poverty, limiting our standard of living and sharing our surplus would likely work as well. But I have no doubt about the power of arguments like Singer's to stall effective action of any sort if we are reluctant to take such action in the first place.

STILL, problems like the inertia of affluence, the push of poverty, and the soaring population are traditional problems. We can think about them, deal with them, perhaps overcome them. In my lifetime, in this country, we have gone from Jim Crow to affirmative action, and there is no saying we can't do something similar with regard to the planet.

I fear that we won't, though, and for an entirely different set of reasons—reasons intimately linked to the unique and depressing moment in which we find ourselves. As we have seen, nature is already ending. And not only does its passing prevent us from returning to the world we previously knew but also, for a couple of powerful reasons, it makes any of the fundamental changes I've discussed even more unlikely than they might be in easier times.

In the first place, the end of nature is a plunge into the unknown, fearful as much *because* it is unknown as because the world may become hot or dry or whipped by hurricanes. But the type of shift in attitudes I've been describing—the deep-ecology alternative, for instance—would make life even more unpredictable. One would have to begin to forgo the traditional methods of securing one's future—children, possessions, and so on. As the familiar

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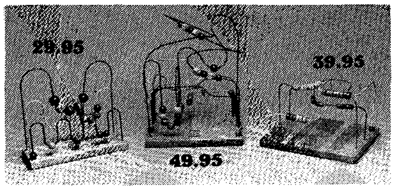

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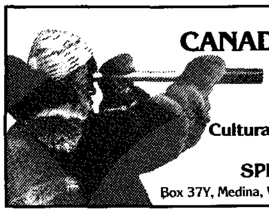

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world around us starts to change, every threatened instinct will have us scrambling to preserve at least our familiar style of life. We can—we may well—make the adjustments necessary for our survival. For instance, some of the early work in agricultural biotechnology has focussed on inventing plants able to survive heat and drought. It seems the sensible thing to do—the way to keep life as "normal" as possible in the face of change. It leads, though, as I have said, to the second end of nature: the imposition of our artificial world in place of the broken natural one.

I got a glimpse of this particular future a few years ago, when I spent some time along the La Grande River in sub-Arctic Quebec. It is barren land but beautiful—a taiga of tiny ponds and hummocks stretching to the horizon, carpeted in light-green caribou moss. There are trees—almost all black spruce, and all spindly, sparse. No one lived there save a small number of Indians and Eskimos—about the number the area could support. A decade or so ago, Hydro-Québec, the provincial utility, decided to exploit the power of the La Grande by building three huge dams along a three-hundred-and-fifty-mile stretch of the river. The largest is the size of fifty-four thousand two-story houses, a Hydro-Québec spokesman told me. Its spillway could carry the combined flow of all the rivers of Europe. Erecting it was a Bunyanesque task: eighteen thousand men carved the roads north through the taiga and poured the concrete. (Photographs show the cooks stirring spaghetti sauce with canoe paddles.) This is the perfect example of "environmentally sound" energy generation; the dams produce a tremendous amount of power without giving off any greenhouse gas. They are the sort of structure we will be clamoring to build as the warming progresses.

But environmentally sound is not the same as natural. The dams have altered an area larger than Switzerland. The flow of the Caniapiscau River has been partly reversed to provide more water for the turbines. In September of 1984, at least ten thousand caribou drowned trying to cross the river during their annual migration. They were crossing at their usual spot, but the river was not its usual size; it was so swollen that many of the animals were swept forty-five miles downstream. Every good

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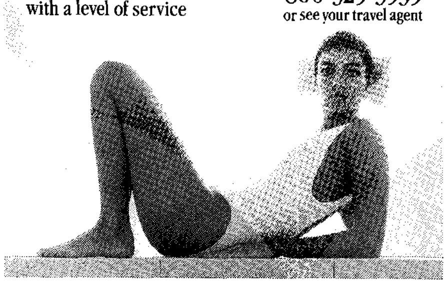

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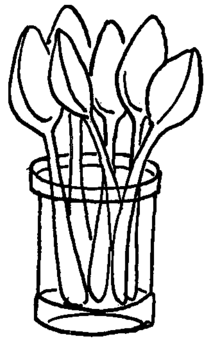
argument—the argument that fossil fuels cause the greenhouse effect, the argument that in a drier, hotter world we will need more water, the argument that as our margin of security dwindles we must act to restore it—will lead us to more La Grande projects, more dams on the Colorado, more "management." Every argument that the warmer weather and increased ultraviolet are killing plants and causing cancer will have us looking to genetic engineering for salvation. And with each such step we will move farther from nature.



And as that happens the counter-argument—the argument for nature—will grow ever fainter. Wendell Berry once argued that in the absence of a "fascination" with the wonder of the natural world "the energy needed for its preservation will never be developed"—that "there must be a mystique of the rain if we are ever to restore the purity of the rainfall." This makes sense when the problem is transitory—sulfur-dioxide emissions drifting over the Adirondacks. But how can there be a mystique of the rain, now that every drop—even the drops that fall as snow on the Arctic, even the drops that fall deep in the remaining forest primeval—bears the permanent stamp of man? Having lost its separateness, nature loses its special power. Instead of being a category like God—something beyond our control—it is now a category like the defense budget or the minimum wage, a problem we must work out. This alone changes its meaning completely, and changes our reaction to it. The end of nature probably also makes us reluctant to attach ourselves to its remnants, for the same reason that we usually don't choose new friends from among the terminally ill. I love the mountain outside my back door—the stream that runs along its flank, and the stream that slides down a quarter-mile mossy chute, and the place where the slope flattens into an open plain of birch and oak. But I know that in some way I resist getting to know it better—for fear, weak-kneed as it sounds, of getting hurt. I fear that if I knew as well as a forester what sick trees look like I would see them everywhere. I find now that I like the woods best in winter, when it is harder to tell what might be dying, but I try not to love even winter too much, because of the January perhaps not so distant when the snow will fall as warm rain. There is no future in loving nature.

And there may not even be much past. Though Thoreau's writings grew in value and importance the closer we drew to the end of nature, the time fast approaches when he will be inexplicable, his notions less comprehensible to future men than cave paintings are to us. Thoreau writes of the land around Katahdin that it "was vast, Titanic, and such as man never inhabits. Some part of the beholder, even some vital part, seems to escape through the loose grating of his ribs. . . . Nature has got him at a disadvantage, caught him alone, and pilfers him of some of his divine faculty. She does not smile on him as in the plains. She seems to say sternly, Why came ye here before your time. This ground is not prepared for you." That sentiment describes perfectly the last stage of the relationship of man to nature; though we had subdued her in the low places, the peaks, the poles, the jungles still rang with her pure message. But what will this passage mean in the years to come, when Katahdin, the "cloud factory," is ringed by clouds that are the work of man? When the great pines around its base have been genetically improved for straightness of trunk and "proper branch drop," or, more likely, have sprung from the cones of genetically improved trees that began a few miles and a few generations distant on some timber plantation? When the moose that ambles by is part of a herd whose rancher is committed to the enlightened notion that "conservation and profit can go hand-in-hand"? Soon Thoreau will make no sense. And when that happens the end of nature, which began with our alteration of the atmosphere and continued with the responses of the planetary managers and the genetic engineers, will be final. The loss of memory will be the eternal loss of meaning.

I understand perfectly well that defiance may bring prosperity, and a sort of security—that more hydropower will mean less carbon dioxide, and that genetic engineering will help the sick, and that much progress can still be made against human misery. And I have no plans to live in a cave, or even in an unheated cabin. If it took twelve thousand years to get where we are, it will take a few generations to climb back down. But this could be the epoch in which people decide at least to go no farther along the path we have been following—when we make not only the necessary technological adjustments to preserve the world from overheating but also the necessary mental adjustments to insure that we will never again put our good ahead of everything else's. This is the path I choose, for it offers at least a shred of hope for a living, eternal, meaningful world.

As birds have flight, our special gift is reason. Part of that reason drives the intelligence that allows us to master DNA or build big power plants. But our reason could also keep us from following blindly the biological imperatives toward endless growth in numbers and territory. Our reason allows us to conceive of our species as a species, and to recognize the danger that our growth poses to it, and to feel something for the other species we threaten. Should we so choose, we could exercise our reason to do what no other animal can do: we could limit ourselves voluntarily, choose to remain God's creatures instead of making ourselves gods. What a towering achievement that would be, so much more impressive than the largest dam—beavers can build dams—because so much harder. Such restraint, not genetic engineering or planetary management, is the real challenge. If we now, today, began to limit our numbers and our desires and our ambitions, perhaps nature could someday resume its independent working. Perhaps the temperature could someday adjust itself down to its own setting, and the rain fall of its own accord.

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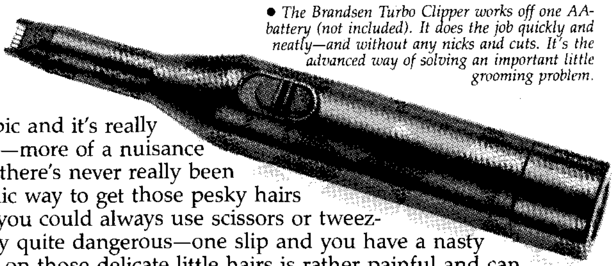

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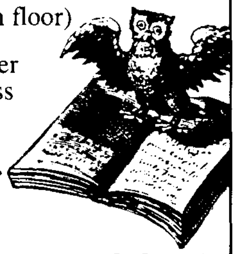

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JAZZ

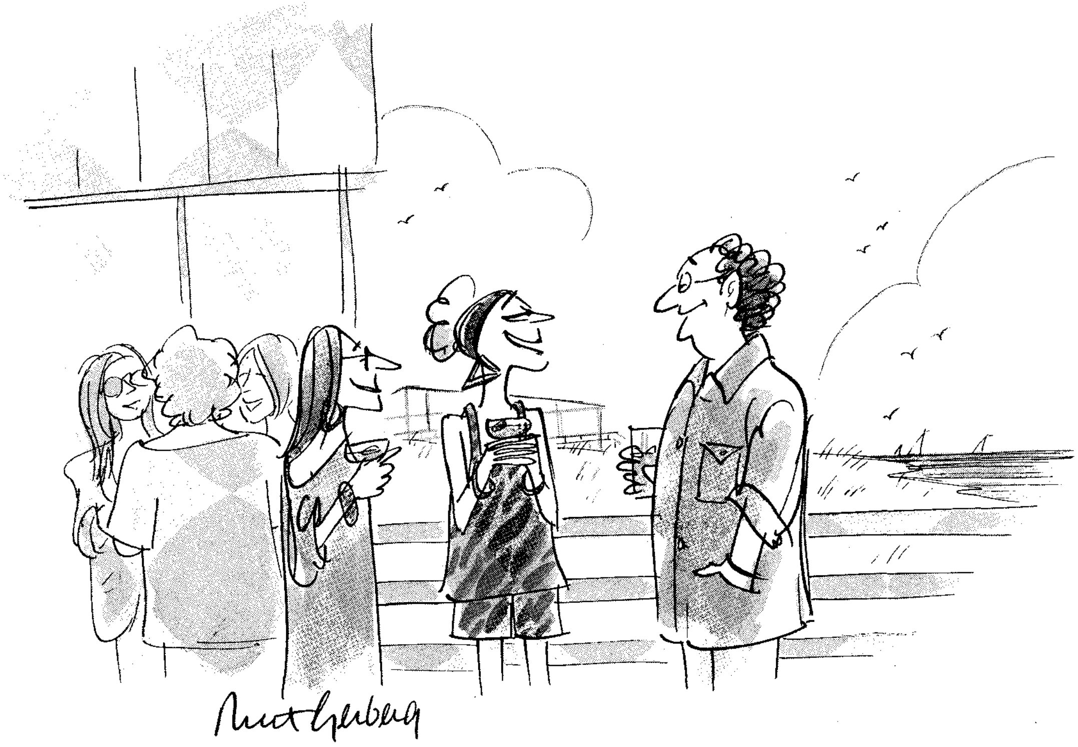
A Hostile Land

THE big news in jazz during the strange, suspended summer of 1941 was that some of the best and most successful white bands had again begun to hire black musicians. Benny Goodman, who already had the guitarist Charlie Christian and the trumpeter Cootie Williams, took on the drummer Sidney Catlett and the bassist John Simmons, completing the best band he ever had. Artie Shaw, who had once employed Billie Holiday, recorded four numbers with the trumpeter Red Allen, the trombonist J. C. Higginbotham, the pianist Sonny White, and the guitarist Jimmy Shirley. Later in the summer, he hired the trumpeter Hot Lips Page. Perhaps the biggest news was that Gene Krupa, still rising as a leader, had brought in the trumpeter, singer, and drummer Roy Eldridge. (Krupa had previously used the manic singer and drummer Leo Watson on several recordings.)

Eldridge, who was thirty, was little known outside jazz circles, where he was regarded with awe, but he was famous when he left Krupa, in 1943. Aside from a spell with Fletcher Henderson's band, those two years were his first big-league experience. "Riding up on that stage at the Paramount Theatre with the Krupa band scared me to death," Eldridge told me for a piece about him written several years ago. "The first three or four bars of my first solo, I'd shake like a leaf, and you could hear it. Then this light would surround me, and it would seem as if there wasn't any band there, and I'd go right through and be all right."

Eldridge played sensational, melodramatic fast solos with Krupa ("After You've Gone," "Twelfth Street Rag") and dramatic, enveloping slow solos ("Rockin' Chair," "Georgia on My Mind"). He delivered hip, funny vocals ("Let Me Off Uptown," "Knock Me a Kiss"). And sometimes he sat in on drums while Krupa fronted the band. A short, bristling, jumping man with a two-hundred-watt smile and snapping eyes, Eldridge astonished the white audiences who flocked to hear him. He continued to wow them when he joined Artie Shaw, in 1944, and he wowed them throughout his career. His love-hate relationship with these audiences was the central paradox of his life. "Droves of people would ask him for his autograph at the end of the night," Shaw once told me, "but later, on the bus, he wouldn't be able to get off and buy a hamburger with the guys in the band. He thought he was travelling through a hostile land, and he was right." The life of the great black soloists was a constant scuffle, compounded by racism. After a short European tour with Benny Goodman, in 1950, Eldridge stayed on in Paris almost a year—presumably to catch his racial breath—and when he came home he made a hair-raising début at the old Stuyvesant Casino. He then joined Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic, where he stayed for much of the fifties; accompanied Ella Fitzgerald in the early sixties; flickered through Count Basie's band in 1966; and, after endless gigging, settled into Jimmy Ryan's in 1970.

For a long time, Eldridge was said to be the link between Louis Armstrong and Dizzy Gillespie. But it has gradually become clear that although he stands between them, he was linked only to Gillespie, and was Gillespie's chief model. Eldridge had ferocious pride, and he would never admit that he had heard Armstrong any earlier than 1931 or 1932, when Armstrong, having passed through his first, rough-and-ready revolutionary phase, suddenly became a player who lived in his upper moonlit register, held great arched long notes, lazed behind the beat, and displayed, for the first time, a stately melancholy. Eldridge must have studied this Armstrong, particularly his fondness for O altitudo notes, but he and Armstrong had very different natures: Armstrong went where the waters took him, while Eldridge, nervous and electric and aggressive, invariably headed upstream. Armstrong was a melodic player who turned his inventions slowly in the sun; Eldridge loved speed and lightning and noise. He told the jazz writer John Chilton, "I had this thing about playing as fast as I could all the time. I double-timed every ballad I did, and never held a long note." Eldridge listened closely to the wild men of the music. One of these was the breakneck trumpeter Jabbo Smith, who, presaging Dizzy Gillespie, stampeded the New York brass players in the late



"Natalie tells me you're the one who makes all the fog happen in 'Phantom.'"

twenties before moving to the Midwest, where Eldridge had a run-in with him in Milwaukee. "We met at a place called Rails," Eldridge told me. "We played fast and slow. The crowd thought I had cut Jabbo, and he didn't talk to me for two weeks, but I didn't fool myself. I knew he had cut me." Another player Eldridge studied and did combat with was the cornettist Rex Stewart, who always went after notes that no one had played before. And Eldridge must have listened to Red Allen when Allen was with Fletcher Henderson, in the mid-thirties. Allen was a one-man avant-garde, who played "strange" notes and had a revolutionary sense of time. He stretched regular four-four time to make it accommodate his melodic inventions without losing the rhythmic pulse. (It was the sort of floating rhythmic attack Billie Holiday perfected in 1935 and 1936.) But Allen also had a dark, mysterious turning-away sound, and it was that elusive quality which Eldridge absorbed. Of course, one of Eldridge's first and greatest admirations was the garrulous Coleman Hawkins of Fletcher Henderson's 1926 recording of "The Stampede." (Later, he and Hawkins became fast friends, and worked, drove, and drank together until Hawkins' death, in 1969.)

The intensity and energy of Eldridge's mature style gave it a bas-relief effect. His tone was heavy and irregular. His growling and rough low register often had a tarnished, angry cast, and as he grew older it became even more plangent. You wondered, when you went to Jimmy Ryan's in the seventies, how he could get his massive style airborne yet again. There were two Eldridges—fast and slow. The fast Eldridge was exhilarating and even maniacal. He might start a solo with an ascending shriek that was part run, part glissando. Then he'd drop, in a dodging arpeggio, through three registers and play a low long note, capped with a brief, hurried vibrato. He would leap to the top of his middle register and issue five strutting staccato notes, placed slightly behind the beat, and whistle back into his high register. He'd move rapidly between two high notes the way most trumpeters move between middle C and E, and pass through a two-octave interval and into a simple middle-register figure. A pause, and he'd drop another octave, to his huge, sad low register, and close the solo with a glancing, swift high note. Eldridge was erratic. Either his adventurousness would carry him off the deep end or he might find himself in a situation that made him uncontrollably nervous—playing in front of a congregation of his peers, as he had to do several times in 1957 on the CBS television show "The Sound of Jazz." Then he'd blare and show off and play empty, gesticulating things. His great slow ballad numbers were anthems. He would generally stay in his middle or low register and fashion ceremonial embellishments on the melody before moving into a full improvisation. This would involve sizable melodic fragments separated by frequent rests and sounding like the original melody turned inside out. Eldridge's slow ballads had a cathedral quality that no other jazz trumpeter—even the 1932 Armstrong—has surpassed.

ELDRIDGE died last winter, at the age of seventy-eight. He had quit playing in 1979, when his health began to deteriorate. "I don't miss the music anymore," he said to me several years after he had stepped down. "I've had enough fun and praise and ovations to keep me. I played fifty years, and that was long enough. Anyway, I found out the main doors were always locked. The color thing. I also found out I'd never get rich." For the last thirty or so years of his life, Eldridge lived, when he was off the road, in a small house in Queens, not far from the Nassau border. He lived with his wife, Vi, who had been a hostess at the old Savoy Ballroom, and whom he had married in 1936, and with his only child, Carole, a legal secretary. Very little in his house suggested what his life had been. In a small alcove off his living room he kept awards from the magazines *down beat* and *Esquire*, one from 1945 and one from 1946; a certificate of appreciation from Mayor John V. Lindsay; and a letter from President Jimmy Carter, thanking him for appearing at the jazz concert given on the South Lawn of the White House in June of 1978. Eldridge never changed much in appearance. His hair whitened and his glasses thickened, but his high, scrapy voice was full of pep and laughter. He would have been pleased by a summation of his work offered the other day by a fervent admirer: "Eldridge was a player of great magnitude."

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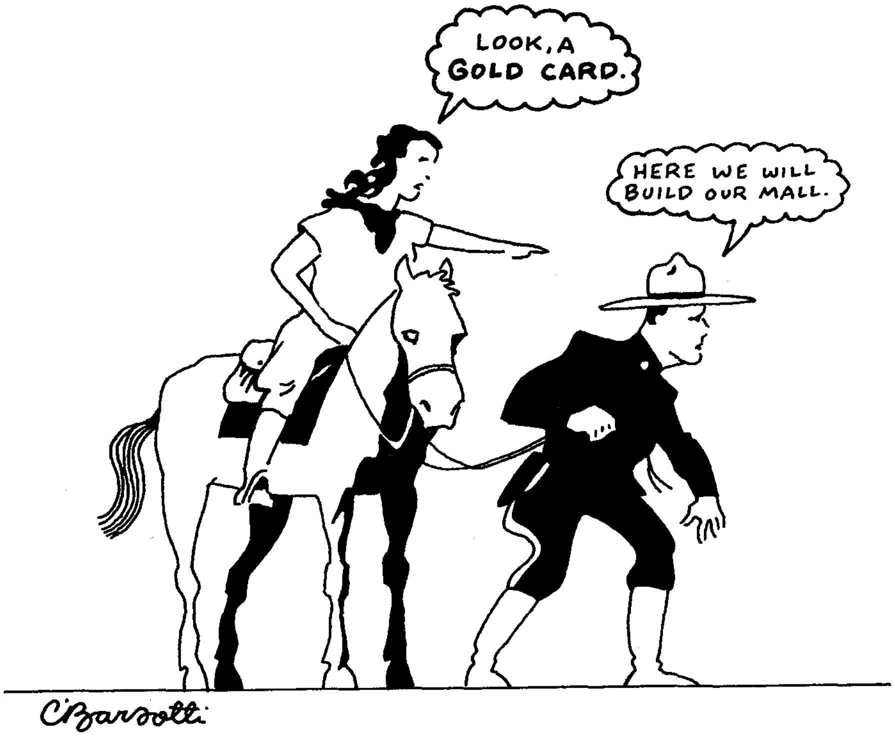
AROUND CITY HALL

Fighting the Power

A Recurrent sight earlier this summer was the Brooklyn resident and film producer/writer/actor Spike Lee appearing on television or making headlines as he talked up “Do the Right Thing,” his movie whose setting is a single block on Stuyvesant Street, in the black Brooklyn neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, on the hottest day of the year. For most of his interviews, Lee wore a white or a blue Dodgers baseball cap; he wore a Dodgers jersey in the movie, in the role of Mookie, the deliveryman for a pizzeria (whose Italian-American owner, Sal, lived in another part of Brooklyn, in Bensonhurst, where, late last month, a sixteen-year-old black high-school student was shot dead in an encounter with white residents). The caps—and sometimes jerseys—were not, of course, those of the Los Angeles Dodgers but those of the Dodgers of Brooklyn, who were feloniously (in the view of most of the residents of their former home borough) removed to the Sun Belt in 1957. It was ten years earlier that the Dodgers had made history by signing Jackie Robinson as the first black major-league player. In a recent *Times* article on the soaring sales of baseball caps, which in some stores are at least twenty times what they were a few years back, the product manager for the Massachusetts company Roman Pro, which holds the major-league license for the sale of merchandise associated with other-than-present-day teams, reported that the white and the blue Brooklyn Dodgers caps ranked first and second on the company’s sales charts, and he credited Spike Lee’s influence for the surge “in all our main markets,” though it has been noted that the appeal was especially strong among customers who (like Lee and most of the characters in his movies) are black.

In several of his interviews, Lee remarked that he was glad his movie was being released this summer, because he hoped that it would help defeat Edward Koch, who is running for a fourth term in this year’s mayoral election. Lee has accused Koch of playing on white New Yorkers’ fear of blacks in order to win white votes, and holds him responsible, through many of his words and actions, for dividing the races here. (During the campaign, the Mayor has conceded that his rhetoric may at times have been “unfortunate.” He often then demands, “But do you want a plastic mayor?”) In interviews about “Do the Right Thing,” Lee nearly always mentions that he decided to make the movie after reading about what happened in December, 1986, in Howard Beach, a ninety-nine-per-cent white community in Queens. A little after midnight one night, three blacks who lived in the East New York section of Brooklyn stopped at a pizzeria after their car broke down on a nearby highway. (Some Howard Beach residents during the next weeks, and, eventually, defense lawyers in the trial that followed, raised the question of what the blacks’ real purpose had been in visiting Howard Beach so late in the evening.) By the time the blacks left the pizzeria, word of their presence had reached a group of white Howard Beach teenagers, many of them with Italian names. At least one of these youths had been quoted as shouting, “Get the niggers!” They then set upon the blacks with baseball bats and chased one of them, Michael Griffith, onto a highway, where he was killed by a car. “Do the Right Thing” is dedicated to the memory of Michael Griffith and to the memory of five other blacks who under controversial circumstances have in recent years ended up dead while in the custody of members of the New York police force. Preserved in the film are such Howard Beach elements as the pizzeria, the confrontation between blacks and Italian-Americans, a baseball bat, and the death of a black man as the result of white violence. After a black youth in the movie, known as Radio Raheem, refuses either to leave the pizzeria or to turn down the ear-splitting volume of his boom box, Sal smashes the box with a baseball bat. Carfuls of white cops respond to the disturbance and one of the cops kills Raheem with a choke hold. Soon afterward, rioting blacks burn down Sal’s pizzeria. They take their fury out on Sal, Lee has explained, because the cops aren’t around for them to attack, having gone back to the station house, where “they collaborate on another myth, some other lie of how another black person has died at the hands of the police.” (According to a study published last month by a local think tank called the Center for Law and Social Justice, twenty-nine New Yorkers, most of them blacks and Hispanics, have died in police custody this year.)

The fact that many white critics of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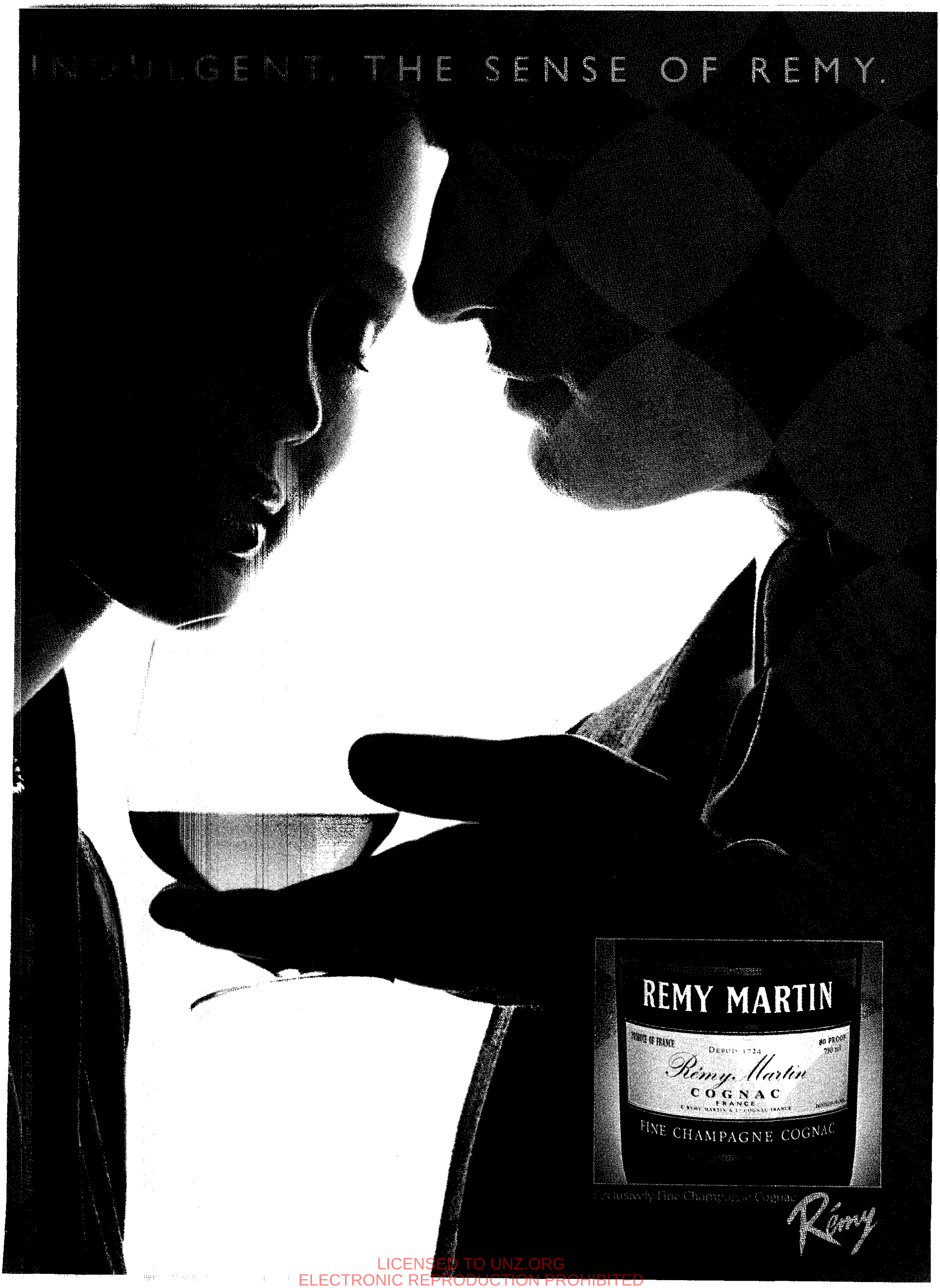
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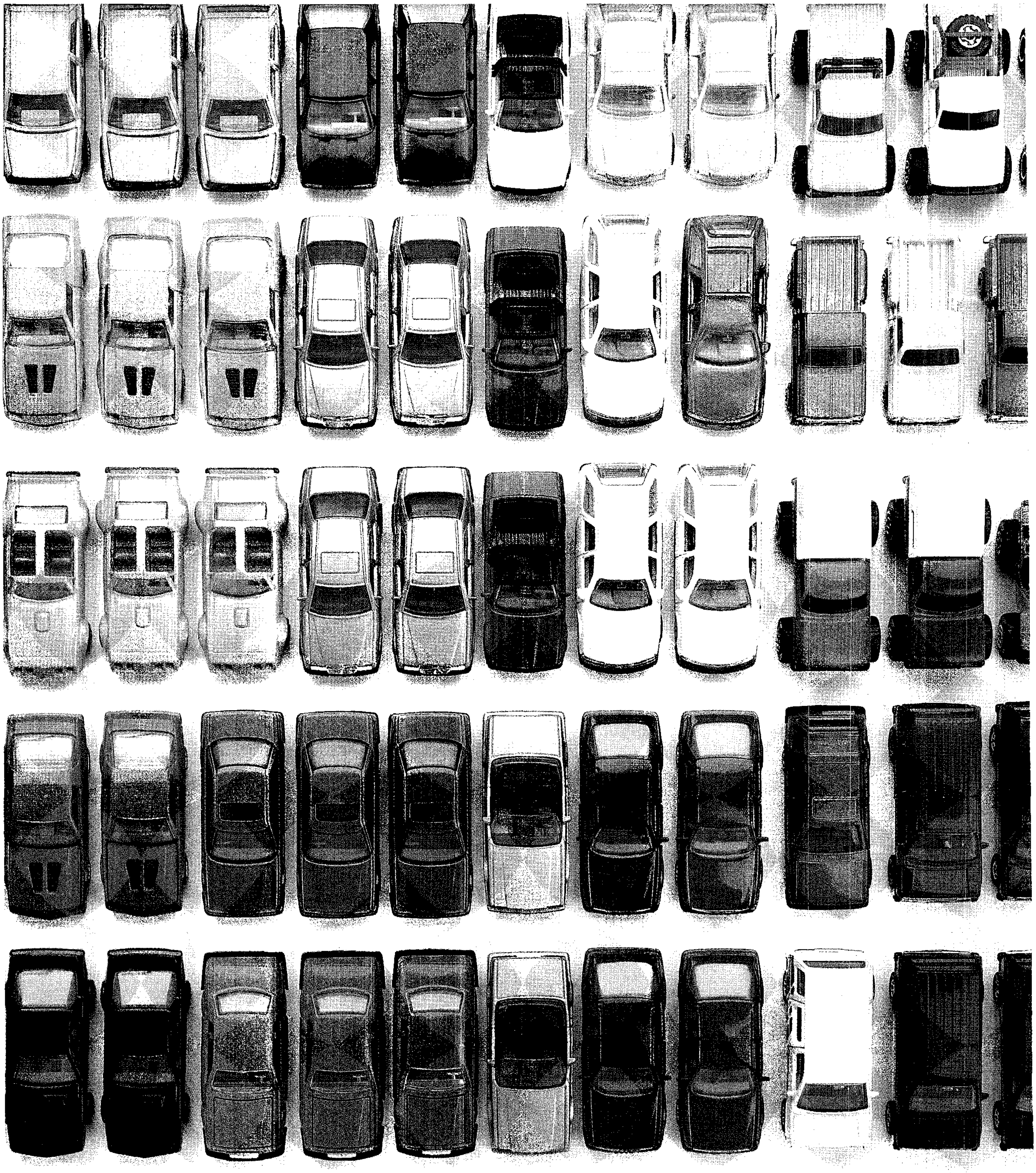

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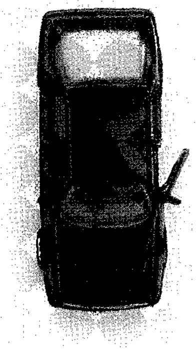

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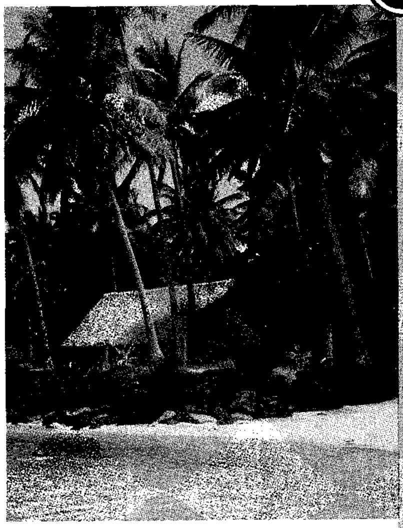

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his film were upset by the wanton destruction of the pizzeria but not by the wanton killing of Raheem, Lee has said, proved that they put more value on property than on human life. Not only is there a black riot at the end of "Do the Right Thing" but the film, whose theme song is "Fight the Power," concludes with a quotation from Malcolm X: "I don't even call it violence when it's self-defense, I call it intelligence." As a result of these messages in the film, quite a few commentators saw it as a reckless incitement to urban violence—to the proverbial phenomenon of the long, hot summer in the steamy black and Latino areas of cities, and especially this city. There were predictions that what was seen as its irresponsible message could be a serious political problem for the mayoral candidate David Dinkins, currently the borough president of Manhattan, who, if he should be elected, would be New York's first black mayor. Similarly, last April, after a crowd of young blacks and Hispanics savagely attacked and raped a white woman jogger in Central Park, there were predictions that their mindless violence would be held against Dinkins. Nevertheless, he continued to maintain his lead in the polls, even over the incumbent mayor.

A few months after the Howard Beach killing, Benjamin Ward, the city's black police commissioner, predicted that the racial divisions it had caused could lead to a long, hot summer of 1987. One reason this did not happen was that Governor Mario Cuomo, with the advice and support of responsible local black political figures, led by Dinkins, appointed Charles (Joe) Hynes to act as a special prosecutor in the case—over the protests of some militant blacks, including the Reverend Al Sharpton, who believed that a white prosecutor (Hynes is an Irish-American) would be biased in favor of the white defendants. In the end, even Sharpton agreed that Hynes had not been biased. Hynes (who is now running for Brooklyn District Attorney) won manslaughter convictions for three of the four Howard Beach attackers who were tried. This June, at a City Council hearing, Ward mentioned the so-called "wilding," or "wolf pack," attack in Central Park as raising the possibility that there could be another long, hot summer ahead. The warm-weather weeks went by, however, and it did not happen. Nor did blacks take to the streets and burn down buildings after seeing "Do the Right Thing." Anyhow, the movie's purpose, Spike Lee kept saying, was to refocus attention on race relations in this country. "I feel there are far too many people walking around that think that racism is . . . a thing of the past," he has said, and that "it ended when L.B.J. signed some papers in 1964."

No one can yet say what effect there will be on racial tensions in this city—or on the mayoral race—as a result of the killing of the young black in Bensonhurst, on the night of August 23rd. That evening, four teen-age blacks from the heavily black Brownsville section of central Brooklyn set out by subway for Bensonhurst, which is in the southwest corner of the borough; a large percentage of Bensonhurst's residents are working-class Italian-Americans, and the black population is estimated at less than one per cent. The reason the four took the subway to Bensonhurst that night was to respond to an ad in Buy-Lines, a throwaway classified-ad paper, which listed a 1982 Pontiac for sale at nine hundred dollars at a Bensonhurst address; sixteen-year-old Yusuf Hawkins, who lived at home with his family and had just been accepted at a Brooklyn technical high school, was interested in buying it. (The next day, a Bensonhurst resident demanded of a reporter, "What was he doing buying a car at nine o'clock at night?") Coming up out of the subway, the four stopped off at a store named Snacks & Candy, and bought film, batteries, and chocolate bars. Later, when some Bensonhurst residents suggested that the visitors might have been armed—that is, might have been attacked in self-defense—a policeman pointed out that what Hawkins had been clutching in his hand was a Snickers bar. A young woman named Gina Feliciano, who lived above the store, had recently, according to police, gone out with blacks and Hispanics a few times and had been warned by neighborhood white boys that they didn't want such people in the area. Her response had been to threaten to invite some of her new friends to her eighteenth-birthday party, scheduled for that night. The party had been cancelled, but the neighborhood boys did not know that. By the time the four black visitors came out of the candy store, a crowd of white teen-agers—some put the number as high as thirty, nearly all with Italian-American names—were ready, many of them armed with Louisville Slugger baseball bats from a nearby playground. They were heard shouting that they were going to beat the visitors up. Then one of them—identified later by police as eighteen-year-old Joseph Fama—was quoted by a deputy police commissioner as shouting, "I'm gonna shoot the nigger." Pulling out a .32-calibre pistol, he fired four shots. One grazed the arm of one of the blacks. Two others pierced Hawkins' heart. He was dead on arrival at a hospital half an hour later.

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The next day, the Hawkins family, attended by the Reverend Al Sharpton, received a constant stream of visitors offering condolences. They included militant blacks, some of whom quoted Malcolm X, and nearly all of whom spoke of the need for a change at City Hall. "I'm tired of hearing 'sorry,'" Hawkins' father said. "He went out to buy a car and now he's dead." The Mayor, who, prudently, doesn't often make impromptu visits to poor black communities, came, accompanied—again prudently—by Commissioner Ward, a very large man. Later, Koch held a press conference in front of the house, during which he said that race relations were much better in New York than in many other cities. He announced that the senior Hawkins had been invited to come to City Hall, not realizing, apparently, that the an-

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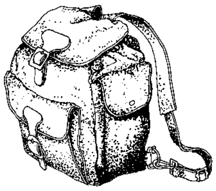

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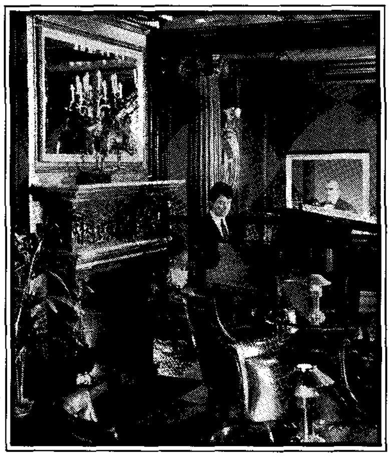
nouncement would reinforce the view of his critics that he sees everything in life—and death—as a mayoral photo opportunity. Representative Charles Rangel, whose district includes much of Harlem, commented, "What would a mourning father want to do at City Hall? . . . I don't see how a visit to City Hall would help if my son were just shot." Also among the visitors was Dinkins, whose low-key manner and refusal to pick fights—or, often, even to answer back—is maddening to some of his supporters. ("You don't have to be loud to be strong" is the theme of one of his television commercials.) Dinkins said that while he didn't hold the Mayor responsible for the killing, "the tone and climate of this city does get set at City Hall." The snuffing out of young Hawkins' life, he said, "could happen to any person of color," and he added, his voice actually rising to a level that could be called loud, "It was a case of 'Any nigger will do.' " Another mayor, he suggested, could "certainly change the climate of the city." Koch commented from City Hall, "It's the worst thing in the world to use a racial act for political purposes." Dinkins' supporters, he said, were engaging in "divisive" rhetoric, which was "not helpful to the city." Throughout the mayoral campaign, when any of his rivals have suggested that life has not gone well for all New Yorkers in the Koch years, he has often accused them of trying to tear down the city.

THE Mayor's view that New York's preëminence in all things that matter must be acknowledged was evident from his first day in office. In his inaugural address in January, 1978, he described the city as "a stroke of genius." At his second inauguration, he said that New York was "a miracle." When he was sworn in for the third time, in 1986, he called it "God's miracle." In July of this year, in the campaign's first televised debate between the Mayor and his three Democratic rivals, he said, "The whole world, if they had a choice of moving. . . the first place they'd come is the city of New York, and everybody here knows it." Last month, when Koch took time out from campaigning to visit Chicago and urge a group of American corporate leaders to move their businesses here, his listeners—a polite crowd—let out only a slight gasp of disbelief when he assured them that New Yorkers were "bearers of the Holy Grail." Presumably, he was not trying to say that the city was a sacred chalice, the object of knightly quests attainable only by those who were pure in thought, word, and deed. Though there may be New York residents who could qualify for this description, they would not include any of the candidates in this year's mayoral race—at least, not to those New Yorkers who have been paying attention to the names the opponents have called each other. Besides Koch and Dinkins, there are two other Democrats, City Comptroller Harrison Goldin and the multimillionaire businessman Richard Ravitch, and two Republicans, former United States Attorney Rudolph Giuliani and Ronald Lauder, of the cosmetics family, whose fortune the *Times* speculated last month might amount to as much as a billion dollars. In recent weeks, one or another of the candidates has been described by one or another rival (usually the highly articulate Mayor) as an ass, a liar, a weasel, a crony of crooks, a yenta, an ungrateful dog, and slime.

Possibly, when the Mayor identified New York with the Holy Grail he was simply trying out lines for delivery at his fourth inauguration, next January—a prospect that seems a good deal more likely than it did in June, when polls showed him twenty-six points behind Giuliani in the general election and fifteen points behind Dinkins in the Democratic primary, with an approval rating of less than twenty-five per cent. A *Post* poll published on August 25th gave the rosiest picture yet of the Mayor's chances. Because the Bensonhurst killing took place late in the evening of August 23rd, it did not make most of the next morning's papers, but by August 25th it was on the front page of the *Times* and the Washington *Post*, and it was there again on August 26th. On August 25th, the story and accompanying illustrations occupied the front pages of two of the local tabloids, the *News* and *Newsday*. The *News* had a picture of Hawkins' body on a stretcher below the headline "JEALOUSY, HATE . . . AND DEATH." However, August 25th was the day when the *Post*, which had endorsed Koch two days earlier, was scheduled to release its poll on the mayoral race, and it went with that, and with a headline that used the word associated with mortality in another sense: "DEAD HEAT." The poll showed Dinkins ahead of Koch in the Democratic primary by forty-two per cent to thirty-eight. In head-to-head matches with the two top Democrats, Giuliani, who early in the summer had been miles ahead of all other contenders, was shown losing to Koch by two points and to Dinkins by twenty-two. ("This campaign doesn't need help, it needs C.P.R.," the *Post's* bureau chief, David Seifman, wrote of Giuliani's chances two days later.) The poll results were not entirely comforting to the Mayor. They showed that even though quite a few more New Yorkers now said they were willing to pull the Koch lever, forty-nine per cent had a negative view of him.

TO go along with his reminder that New York is God's miracle, the Mayor likes to mention that it is the capital of international finance, of communications, of the arts, of fashion, of entertainment, and (he sometimes ventures) of sports. Although his mayoral rivals do not dispute these points, they note—there they go, tearing down again—that, as everyone knows who looks at the numbers, and at television documentaries, New York is also the capital of AIDS, of crack, and of the homeless, and that there were eighteen hundred and ninety-six murders here last year, or more than five a day: a record, putting the city right up there in the violent-crime books. It is also a sad fact that some of New York's place-names and the names of some of its residents are the ones most familiar in the national discourse as symbols of racial violence. There is Howard Beach, there is Central Park. There is Bernhard Goetz, whose shooting of four blacks on a subway made him either a devil or an international folk hero, depending on one's point of view. George Bush frequently mentioned during the last weeks of the 1988 Presidential campaign that he was proudly carrying about with him the police shield of Edward Byrne, the young cop who in February of last year was shot dead by black drug dealers in South Jamaica, Queens. ("Did you see his blue eyes?" one of the blacks was said to have asked the killer.) During the mayoral campaign, however, when there has been a question about racial tension in the city Koch often answers that anyone who looks at the polls will find that the subject is not high on New Yorkers' list of concerns—that only about three per cent of them list it as first. Ranked ahead of it are drugs, crime, and homelessness—all of which, the Mayor quickly points out, are national problems. If racial tension does not show up in the polls, or in the polls as Koch recalls them, however, it may be because—sadly again—race is part of nearly everything that most people who live here are deeply worried about. To many white New Yorkers, drugs, crime, and homelessness have black faces. When they think of a youthful murderer, they do not at once picture, for example, a young Italian-American from Bensonhurst.

THE city's mayoral candidates, who, by Primary Day, September 12th, expect to have spent a combined total of at least twenty million dollars on the race, complained well into August that many New Yorkers still didn't seem to realize that the challenge of making a choice in the mayoral primaries was virtually upon them. In past decades in election years, nominees were usually chosen in June, leaving a sensible interval of R. and R. until the campaign got really revved up, a few weeks before the general election. Since 1977, however, the primaries have been in September, consigning the candidates to another kind of long, hot summer as they slog from rally to debate to ethnic parade, trying to attract the serious notice of voters, many of whom are convinced that the only important topics in life during the high-temperature months are the weather and baseball. For the first debate among the Democratic candidates this year, on July 26th, New Yorkers' minds were understandably on the fact that the temperature was ninety-six, the hottest day of the year. For a debate on August 1st, a major distraction was the Mets' having just signed Minnesota Twins pitcher Frank Viola, who the Mets owners hoped would save the current season for the team. Viola's arrival was not directly related to the departure from the Mets of Mookie Wilson, who was traded the same week, or there might have been complaints from some quarters in which the word "racism" was used. Commissioner Ward said a few years ago that racism was as American as apple pie, so it shouldn't be surprising that some blacks keep pointing out that racism in



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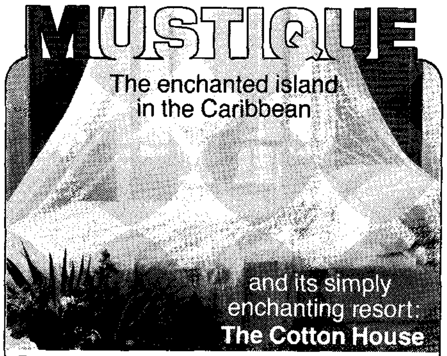

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baseball didn't end just because Jackie Robinson signed on with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Lately, some of them have complained that the percentage of blacks on major-league teams is decreasing. Last June, the black-owned newspaper *New York Voice* ran a front-page picture of the new Mets player Juan Samuel, a Dominican, who had just joined the team in exchange for two white players. Only two weeks earlier, the *Voice* noted, it had pointed out that, since Mookie Wilson was often on the bench, Darryl Strawberry was the only black on the regular full-time Mets roster. The *Voice* congratulated the Mets for having responded by bringing on Samuel. Its editorial on the subject was headed "NEW METS PLAYER: DARK ISN'T HE?" The departure of Mookie Wilson was a particular loss to both black and white baseball fans here. He had been with the team the longest of any Met and was regarded with such affection that when he came on the field at Shea Stadium the cry of "Moo-kie! Moo-kie! Moo-kie!" often sounded almost like a croon. Spike Lee knew what he was doing when he gave the name of Mookie to his pizza deliveryman, whom it was important to see throughout the film as a sympathetic character.

WHEN blacks die or suffer some terrible injustice at the hands of whites in this country, the name of South Africa is often invoked. In this city in recent years, the chant at many protest rallies has been "Mayor Koch, have you heard? This is not Johannesburg." Even many New Yorkers sympathetic to the blacks' cause have seen this as foolishly extreme—after all, there is no official apartheid here, nor does any black need a pass to move around the city. Nevertheless, the August 23rd killing was a reminder that in two nearly all-white communities—Howard Beach, in Queens, and now Bensonhurst, many miles away across the breadth of Brooklyn—blacks have died violently because some residents felt that they had a perfect right to attack blacks who had ventured uninvited into their communities. On the Saturday and the Sunday after Yusuf Hawkins' violent death, several hundred blacks from central Brooklyn, led by black ministers, came to Bensonhurst and marched, peaceably, past the site of the killing. They were met both days by hundreds of Bensonhurst

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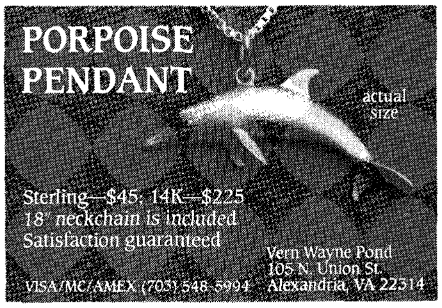
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residents, some of them wearing "Don't Worry, Be Happy" T-shirts and waving Italian as well as American flags, who shouted at them, "Niggers go home!" and "Do you want a watermelon?" At one point, Bensonhurst residents waved watermelons at the marchers and sang a jeering chorus of "We Are the World." Some of the spectators shouted, "Central Park! Central Park!" The marchers then shouted back, "Howard Beach! Howard Beach!"

On August 28th, the Mayor said during a press conference that the protesters' visits to Bensonhurst should cease. ("KOCH: STOP THE MARCHES" was the *Newsday* headline.) "I am talking about what is helpful to the city—lowering the passions, lowering the rhetoric, and you don't do that by marching into a community and getting that community to feel that they are the culprit," Koch said. The Reverend Timothy Mitchell, a Queens minister who had participated in the demonstration, said, "I'm sure the mayor of Montgomery didn't want Martin Luther King to protest in marches. I'm sure Bull Connor didn't want him to protest." The Reverend Herbert Daughtry, whose church is in Brooklyn, noted that Koch often referred to his own participation in a civil-rights march in the South in the nineteen-sixties, and that he had not worried then about hurting the feelings or damaging the reputation of "a whole region." On August 30th, the *Times* weighed in editorially, saying that surely the Mayor must remember "the Southern politicians' jeers against 'outside agitators.' " Would that the Mayor "were as attentive to the anger and pain felt by the marchers as to the affront to people who live in Bensonhurst," the editorial went on, adding, "What's most troubling is what he didn't say, the sympathy he did not express." When Koch went to the funeral home on the night of the wake for young Hawkins, his reception was so hostile that he and his bodyguards were hustled out a side door.

BY September 1st, three of Hawkins' alleged Bensonhurst attackers had been charged on an array of counts that included murder. August 30th was the day of the Hawkins funeral, in Brownsville. Jesse Jackson did not attend, having stopped by at the wake, the evening before, and having later taped a radio show during which he compared Koch's actions in New York with those of Governor George Wallace in Alabama in the nineteen-sixties. Thousands of blacks turned out for the funeral, including Spike Lee and the mother of Michael Griffith, and so did a few white politicians. Earlier that week, Lee had demanded, "Where are the Italian-American leaders? . . . Where is Cuomo?" Cuomo had called the Hawkins family and asked permission to attend the funeral. Still, he was booed, as was Giuliani. Koch was greeted with cries of "Koch go home! Koch go home!" Again, the Mayor and his bodyguards left in a hurry, this time by way of a back fire escape, as the mourners sang "We Shall Overcome." Dinkins was the only politician to receive warm applause. There were police sharpshooters on rooftops to guard against violence. On the street below and inside the church were the Reverend Louis Farrakhan's Fruit of Islam soldiers, mostly in dark suits and bow ties, with impassive faces; they had also guarded Lee's set for "Do the Right Thing." Dinkins, who had once been given a police guard, after his criticism of Farrakhan's anti-Semitic remarks caused the Muslim leader to threaten his life, did not criticize Farrakhan, who spoke at the funeral, and neither did the Mayor, who said afterward, in newly subdued tones, that Farrakhan had played "a very principled, helpful role" in the service. Perhaps local black outrage over the events in Bensonhurst would insure the large black turnout that Dinkins needs to beat Koch on Primary Day. Perhaps the outrage of other voters over the involvement of Jackson, Farrakhan, and Al Sharpton—detested names to many New Yorkers—and anger over further black protest marches in white neighborhoods would bring those voters out in huge numbers, too. The Malcolm X statement often quoted by Brooklyn blacks in response to the killing was not the one that ends "Do the Right Thing" but one that some of them saw as having more telling implications for the mayoral race: "It is the ballot or the bullet." In an Op-Ed piece in the *Times* on the day before the Hawkins funeral, the Reverend Daughtry described New York as a powder keg. "A change must come. . . . If it is not the ballot, I fear it will be the bullet." There was no doubt that the mayoral race now had the city's attention.

—ANDY LOGAN

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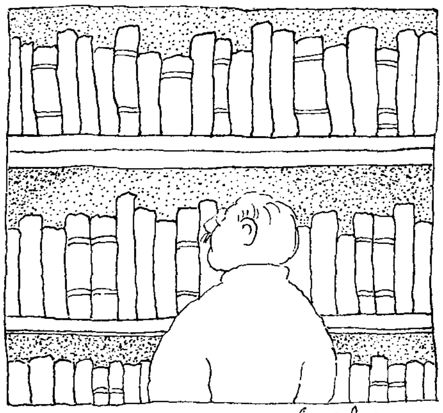
Passions, Prejudices

LIKE engaging memoirs of every era, Sallie Bingham's lively account of her life gives the reader the sense of being in a past milieu that has been rescued from oblivion by an observant participant. "Passion and Prejudice: A Family Memoir" (Knopf; $22.95) has the feel of a novel, and although the author takes great pains to maintain a cool, even, elevated tone, the genre that most of her characters belong to is American gothic.

One is drawn quickly into Bingham's saga of family tragedy, alleged murder, Southern emotional opacity, and dynastic rise and fall—so quickly, in fact, that it takes a while to realize that the story has three distinct subplots: one is a poetically rendered, staunchly feminist account of Sallie's coming-of-age as a member of a successful and socially prominent Louisville, Kentucky, newspaper family in the nineteen-forties and fifties; another is an explanation of the motives and events that led to her decision to sell her fifteen-per-cent share of stock in the family media empire, a decision that led, in turn, to its sale, in 1986, for four hundred and thirty-three million dollars; and the third is a quasi-Jungian exploration of her antecedents—particularly Mary Lily Flagler, the rich socialite her paternal grandfather married in 1916. Mary Lily was the widow of Henry Flagler, a co-founder, with John D. Rockefeller, of Standard Oil; her demise under mysterious circumstances eight months after her marriage to Robert Bingham provided the capital for his purchase of the Louisville *Courier-Journal* and the Louisville *Times*—an acquisition that launched the Bingham fortune but cast a shadow over the family which it would never be allowed entirely to forget.

The list of characters is extensive and more or less constant in the three stories. Sallie Bingham's formidable maternal grandmother, Munda, was a genteelly poor "writer and spinner of tales," who raised her seven children to "look outward rather than inward" (an imperative apparently shared by most members of the Southern society in which the author grew up). "The Colonel," Sallie's paternal great-grandfather, was a Civil War veteran, the founder of a boys' school in North Carolina, and the inspirational source of the family's firm belief in the rule of male primogeniture, even unto the present generation. Copious evidence is presented to support the book's charge of unrepentant family sexism, but the characteristically high-toned family style of piggery is best conveyed by quoting from a paper the Colonel read at a meeting of a men's club in Asheville, North Carolina, in 1907: "Men produce thought; but women produce men," he declared, and, while supporting education for women in principle, he thought it prudent to remind his audience of the incapacitating effect of "the partly submerged half of the world" 's episodes of "periodicity." The Colonel's son Robert, known as the Judge, was a charming, ambitious lawyer, whose purchase of the Louisville papers gave him the social and financial status that had formerly eluded him, and whose support of F.D.R. eventually earned him an ambassadorship to the Court of St. James's. Barry, Sr., the Judge's son and Sallie's father, turned the *Courier-Journal* into one of the most widely admired newspapers in the country. He, too, was a charmer, but he seems to have been a strangely two-dimensional and inaccessible father—a man "almost incapable of showing any emotion except pleasure," according to Marie Brenner, whose "House of Dreams," published last year by Random House, is one of two other recent books that have scrutinized the Bingham family. (David Chandler's schadenfreude-filled "The Binghams of Louisville" is the third; a fourth, by the journalists Susan Tifft and Alex Jones, is due out next year.) Mary, the author's mother, is depicted as an intelligent, driven woman of almost Roman fortitude, whose fierce devotion to her husband caused her to freeze her five children out.

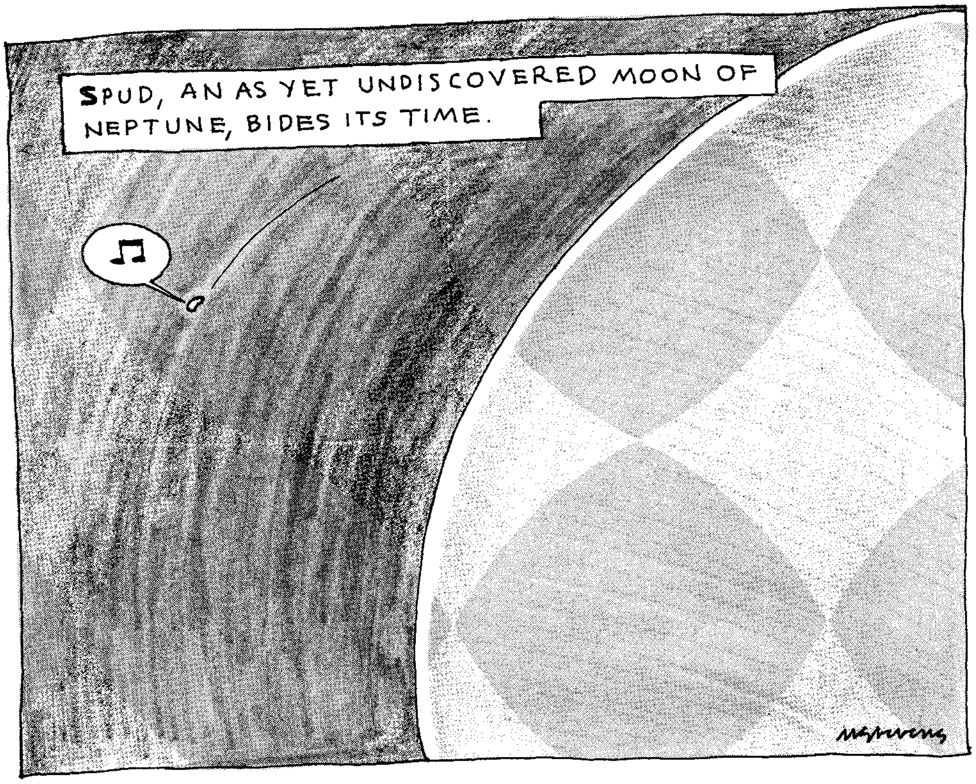


The author and her siblings—Worth, Barry, Jr., Jonathan, and Eleanor—all appear to have suffered from emotional undernourishment. Worth, the handsome, hard-drinking, reckless eldest son, died in a freak accident in 1966, at the age of thirty-four. Barry, Jr., comes across as a rigidly moralistic, hardworking editor, who reluctantly stepped into his older brother's shoes, and whose deathlock rivalry with Sallie (a rivalry that, despite Athena-like protestations to the contrary, obviously went both ways) precipitated the events that led to the loss of the family's newspapers. Jonathan, the troubled and brilliant youngest son, died two years before Worth, at the age of twenty-one, while he was attempting to rig electrical wires to the family barn for a Boy Scout reunion. Eleanor, Sallie's younger sister, a filmmaker and sometime hippie, is in fuzzier focus than the others—possibly because she was the only child to remain close to her parents after the loss of the papers and the other family companies. There are also a host of ex-husbands and ex-wives, and, in cameo appearances, a number of devoted servants, black and white, who seem to have brought the author the only secure moments of her childhood.

Thus described, "Passion and Prejudice" probably sounds like a kind of "Dallas" with bluestocking pretensions. But it isn't. Bingham has a genuine flair for making people come alive, and a sharp eye for the dramatic content of day-to-day life. Her sketch of her brother Worth—though unfairly incomplete, since it omits any account of his maturer years, when he became a serious muckraking reporter and a devoted husband and father—is illustrative:

> Worth was treated with special deference. He had an electric quality, without moral or intellectual dimensions, like a

> bolt of lightning that struck at random. His temper was ferocious, and he used his muscle to get what he wanted, pushing and shoving Barry and me around. He was extravagantly emotional, angry and outraged at one moment, then rapidly cooling and moving on to another interest. All his interests were obsessions: football, tennis, swimming, and, later, the pursuit of girls, gambling and liquor.... Worth's ability to get what he wanted, however, was the most compelling feature of his personality. I used to think that everyone was a little afraid of him, even the grown-ups. I do not remember that he was ever punished.


SPUD, AN AS YET UNDISCOVERED MOON OF NEPTUNE, BIDES ITS TIME.
♫

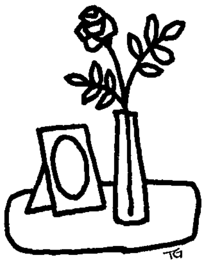
The picture that the author paints of her childhood is one in which the comforts and ease of a privileged life spent largely in a grandish Louisville mansion (familiarly referred to, like Sing Sing, as the Big House), in chic establishments in France, and in various elegant summer retreats were overshadowed by the remoteness and shallowness of her family. Despite the fact that the *Courier-Journal* and the *Times* were long considered to be among the most liberal papers in the country, because of their strong stands on civil-rights issues, busing, strip-mining, and equal rights for women, Bingham maintains that in private her family was racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic. The ultimately conservative life-view at the Big House was, she suggests, a heritage of "the Old South, where duty was a passion, patriotism a religion, and the fathering of sons a holy mission." In the male dynastic tradition in which she was raised, "Bingham women fell silent, died, or disappeared," she writes, adding, "In each generation, women . . . lost out in the battle for inheritance, power, and money. They signed papers without understanding them, were parties to lawsuits aimed at disinheriting them, and turned what money they had over to their male relatives to invest. Yet in spite of all their disappointments, their loyalty remained to father and brother, thirdly to husband, and almost never to mother, sister, or daughter. Power was with the men."

EARLY in her life, Sallie Bingham's ties of loyalty to any member of her family, male or female, were seriously damaged. This seems to have come about from her constantly being trotted out for display, like a trick dog; from a general sense of neglect; and from a feeling that she was less valued than her brothers. In an obvious way, the memoir is an act of vengeance and catharsis—a kind of literary "Mommie Dearest." But it is also a fascinating American social history, animated by a largely anecdotal narrative that is most convincing when it is least didactic.

"The fam," as she occasionally refers to the rest of the Binghams, sent to book-review editors, just before the publication of her book, a two-and-a-half-pound fact-filled rebuttal of its contents (five and a half pounds lighter than a similar document repudiating the Chandler book, which they compiled two years ago). This missive seems at the very least to support Bingham's theory that her family's liberal principles had darker dimensions, but, loath as one is to admit it, the rebuttal seriously challenges a number of the book's underlying assumptions—particularly in the section about the death of Mary Lily. Bingham does not help her credibility when, as a kind of explanation of her intent, she quotes, at the beginning of the book, a dictum from Jung: "I can only make direct statements, only 'tell stories.' Whether or not the stories are 'true' is not the problem. The only question is whether what I tell is my fable, my truth." It is also interesting to note that—as Brenner reports in her book—the family harbored memories of Sallie's tendency to exaggerate and to present personal grievances in the form of broad social issues.

Bingham is surely tarring with too broad a brush when she attempts to discredit the integrity of the papers' editorial policies. However much the *Courier-Journal* and the *Times* may have fallen short of her notion of ideal servants of the public, and however much the Judge and Barry, Sr., may have used their editorial pages to expand their political influence, the fact remains that for all sixty-eight years of family ownership the newspapers' liberal voice rarely wavered. Not for nothing were the windows of the Courier-Journal Building, which housed both papers, smashed (when the editors supported busing) and the site referred to by local conservatives as Red Square.

On the other hand, Bingham's revelation that in private "the fam" 's social ambitions and the conventions of their circle held them fast to the values and prejudices of the Old South seems plausible. It is not so much the numerous semi-indentured black servants, and the whites-and-Gentiles-only country clubs, and the patronage-trading, hard-drinking, good-old-boy social milieu that convince—such things were, after all, typical of her parents' era and class—as the many anecdotes in which the social veneer cracks and the unreconstructed prejudices ooze out. She recalls one hot summer afternoon, for example, when Worth invited the seventeen-year-old son of the family gardener to join him and Barry and a couple of friends for a swim in the family pool. When their mother found out about it that evening, she screamed at Worth, reprimanded both sons in the severest terms, and, according to Barry, who told Brenner about the event, “began to go on and on about polio and syphilis and the germs that colored people have,” and “then she drained the pool.” (Though frequently unable to communicate with each other even about simple matters, the family members seem in general to have been inexplicably overeager to talk for publication. Often the only information they had about important family matters was what they learned in the newspaper and magazine articles they read about each other.) Mary Bingham, writing to her husband (who was overseas serving as a naval public-affairs officer at the time), confided that she was well aware that the episode made her look like a hypocrite, yet she expressed amazement that “any child brought up in this part of the world would not have taken in through his pores a sense of the mores which forbid inviting nigs to swim in the pool.” And she added, pointedly, “Sallie quite often goes down to the pool alone now, as she can swim quite well to take care of herself, and it makes real Carry Me Back to ole Virginia goose pimples break out on me to think of George's falling into the habit of swimming whenever he takes the notion.”



Bingham claims that because of the conflicting nature of its values the family often waffled editorially on sensitive issues. One case she cites as an example is that of Carl Braden, an employee of the *Courier-Journal*, who, in the nineteen-fifties, deeded a house in a whites-only neighborhood to a black couple and was later arrested and jailed for sedition after someone blew the house up. In her opinion, the paper was less than wholehearted in its support of Braden or its coverage of the issues. Actually, a good number of the *Courier-Journal's* editorials during the period expressed chagrin over Braden's treatment and condemned the sedition charge (it was declared invalid, but only after Braden had served seven months in prison)—though several editorials sympathizing with the affected neighborhood's white property owners were clearly not on the side of the angels.

Similarly, her tree-by-tree account of the events that led to her decision to sell her stock provides only the dimmest view of the forest. In 1977, during a bad period in her life (a second marriage had failed and her writing career seemed stalled), her father invited her to return to Louisville from New York and suggested that she take a job as editor of the *Courier-Journal's* Sunday book page. Like his invitation to her and the other women in the family to serve on the boards of the three family-owned companies (the newspapers constituted one, a TV station and two radio stations another, and a printing plant the third), this offer was viewed by Sallie chiefly as a manipulative act, aimed at including her “in the ranks of maimed dependents.” Nonetheless, she eventually accepted both offers, though with misgivings. From the outset, she says, it was clear that “the men, who actually ran the papers, did not really welcome interference from their female relations on the board.” (When she was made a director of the TV and radio stations, she had been inside them only once, for an interview.) It is impossible to tell from what she writes whether her growing knowledge of the workings of the papers gave her a firm grasp of their financial situation, but she thought it did, and throughout her six-year tenure she was vexed at having her opinions, and her views on management, politely ignored. Inevitably, she found herself at loggerheads with brother Barry on every major issue that arose.

Brenner does not appear to have liked any of the Binghams much. But, unlike Sallie, who describes her brother as inept, driven, and “desperate . . . to earn Father's approval,” she gives Barry credit for keeping a level head and caring deeply and fairly disinterestedly about the papers' welfare. Brenner sticks to this view despite an almost palpable physical aversion to the man, whom she describes as “oppressively thin,” with “a handlebar moustache that sprouted from his upper lip into two waxed points, like tiny spears.” Although, as chairman of the board, Barry, Sr., still ruled the Bingham empire, Barry, Jr., as editor and publisher, was nominally in charge of the papers, and it obviously galled his sister to be in a position inferior to his.

The event that catapulted Sallie Bingham toward what in retrospect seems an inevitable decision to sell her stock occurred in 1980. To guard the family's interests and preserve its control of the companies, the family lawyers drafted a buyback agreement stating that if a stockholder wished to sell his or her holdings the family would be given ninety days to match any bid. Unfortunately, the agreement was presented in what Bingham considered a perfunctory way, over coffee on the terrace of the Big House, and was couched in “technical language” that she did not understand. She refused to sign it—to the amazement of all present. She says that this “little incident shows how firmly entrenched the notion is that women can easily be fooled,” and clearly regards her noncompliance as an important act of feminist self-assertiveness. But her account leaves out entirely the context in which the agreement was drafted in the first place—the background of unfriendly takeovers and mergers and company raidings that were rampant in that period and against which the lawyers naturally wanted to protect the family. She believes that the lawyers and the men in the family were in collusion to keep the women in the dark about the reasons for having a buyback agreement. It seems more reasonable to assume that they could not imagine anyone's *not* grasping its significance.

But, contrary to popular belief, when Sallie did decide to sell, the newspapers could still have been kept in family hands. They were lost because Barry stubbornly refused to meet his sister's price—or, in effect, to acknowledge the reality of her position and allow her the recognition she was demanding. A family-hired assessor valued her stock as worth somewhere between twenty-two and twenty-nine million dollars. Sallie sought a second opinion from another firm, and was told that her stock was worth far more —over sixty million dollars. Bingham *père*, who eventually made the decision to sell to the Gannett chain (a decision his son called “a betrayal” and “irrational”), deferred to his son through-

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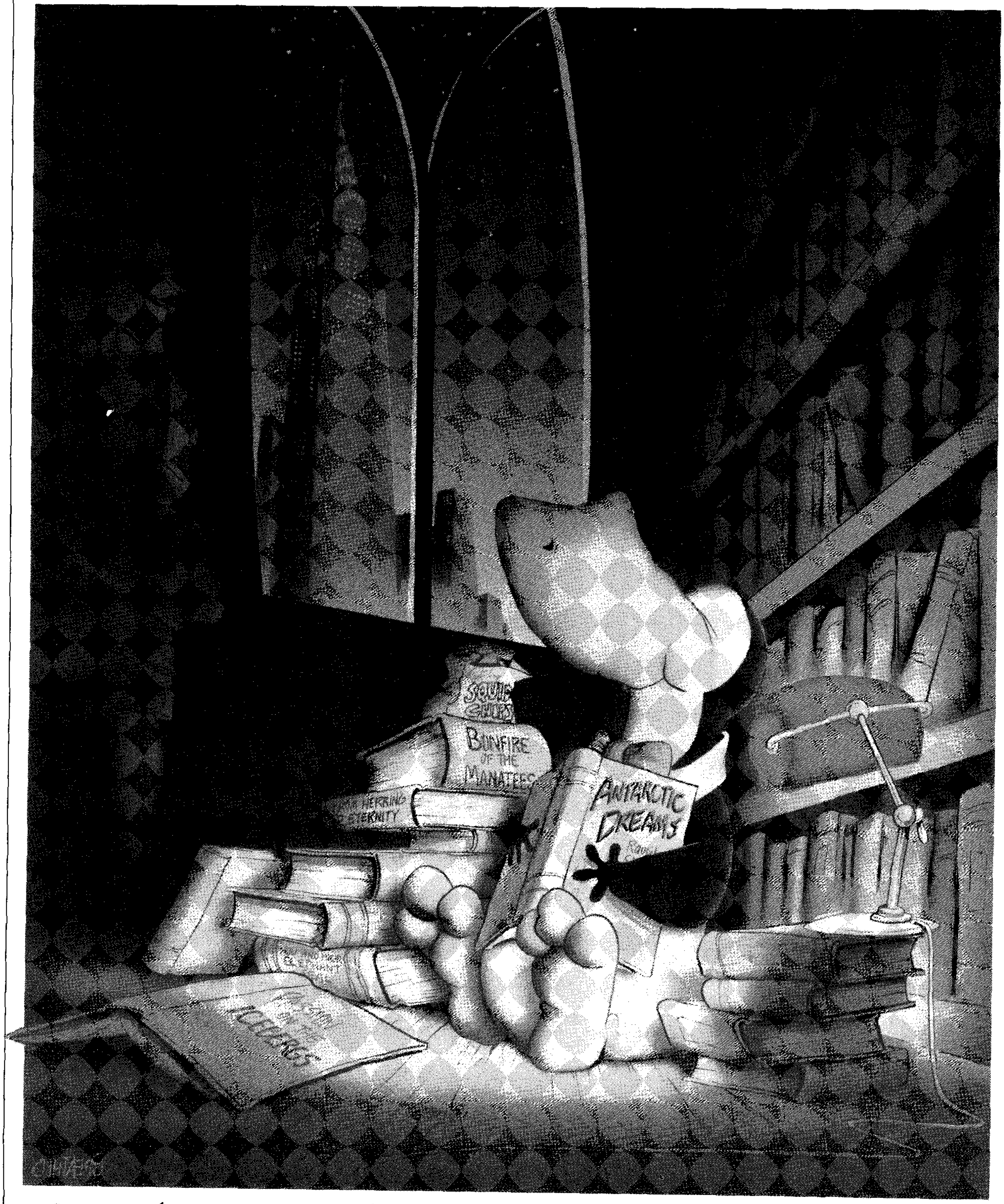
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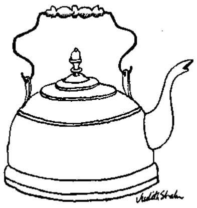
out the negotiations with Sallie—for the sake, he said, of family unity. After the negotiations with her family had dragged on for many months, Sallie was offered twenty-five million dollars, which no one thought she would accept, and she did not. But Brenner notes that "the bankers all said privately that Sallie would be willing to settle for thirty-two million," and adds that if the family had truly wanted to, "it would have been easy enough to buy Sallie out, as Shearson Lehman Brothers had advised them to do. . . . Sallie would have been content and felt she had scored a psychological victory. But Barry Junior could not bring himself to give in to his sister's demands. He said, 'Our profit margin was too low. We could never have replaced our equipment in the future. And if we had a bad year, the papers would have been in serious shape.' That wasn't exactly right. In fact, there was ample money in the company."



A curious twist in the "business" story is Bingham's account of her career as the *Courier-Journal's* book editor. She took the job on a temporary basis in 1981. When the editor whom she had been hired to replace returned from sick leave, she left, but a few months later Barry, Sr., telephoned her to ask her to take the job on a permanent basis. The editor, a woman friend and neighbor of Sallie's, was to be transferred to the magazine section—a move Sallie knew that she would object to. Nonetheless, despite the protests of Barry, Jr., over the unseemliness of the maneuver, Sallie accepted the offer. Considering the high moral standards to which she holds everyone else, her mea culpa on this subject has a decidedly hollow ring: her punishment, she says, was having to encounter the woman in the halls and in the ladies' room—a non-working person's view of hell.

The most dubious section of the book by far, however, is its author's examination of the circumstances surrounding the death of Mary Lily Flagler Bingham, the second of the Judge's three wives, in which she accepts the murder-by-drugging theory advanced by David Chandler and takes it into hyperspace with a melodramatic imagining of Mary Lily's last days, complete with fevered deathbed musings. To be sure, Mary Lily's unexpected death leaves many unanswered questions. Why, for example, did Mary Lily, a gregarious thrower of gala balls who seems to have hardly left the dance floor in all the years of her marriage to Henry Flagler, suddenly become a semi-recluse after her marriage to Robert Bingham and fall so quickly into an alcohol-induced stupor? Why was she—then the richest woman in America—not sent to one of the many sanatoriums around the country for problem drinkers if her problem was, as everyone believed, alcoholism, but instead kept, heavily sedated with morphine, in an isolated mansion under the care of local (and, according to Sallie Bingham and Chandler, incompetent) doctors? And why was the infamous codicil to her will which left the Judge five million dollars (her original will left him nothing) drawn up in a doctor's office shortly before her death? Bingham believes that Mary Lily died, "like so many other women, rich and poor, of a combination of causes that included depression, neglect and medical incompetence, the failure of love, isolation, and a heart probably weakened by the syphilis she had contracted from the Judge," and that "she also died because she would not, for a long time, give the man his money." The syphilis theory comes from Chandler, who learned from Mary Lily's relatives (they had her body exhumed because of suspicions of foul play) that there were small traces of arsenic found in her body. Since arsenic was sometimes used in the treatment of syphilis, Chandler concluded that not only Mary Lily but Judge Bingham, who was plagued with dermatological problems all his life, suffered from the disease. Unfortunately, neither the full autopsy report, which is still in the possession of Mary Lily's descendants—information from it was apparently made available to Sallie Bingham—nor any of the medical records of the Judge support this theory; Dr. Grover Hutchins, a pathologist at Johns Hopkins who was given access to the Judge's medical records, points out in a letter reproduced in the family rebuttal that small amounts of arsenic were often used in embalming fluid. There is even less likelihood in the farfetched notion that Flagler, whose marriage to Mary Lily appears to have been a singularly happy one despite a thirty-seven-year age difference, was possibly the third link in this syphilitic daisy chain. Bingham also speculates that the Judge's first wife, Eleanor, committed suicide (for reasons similar to Mary Lily's) by jumping out of her automobile in front of a trolley, although all the contemporary accounts of her death state that it was the result of an accident and that she was fatally injured by the impact while still inside the car.

Robert Bingham was never formally charged with any crime associated with his wife's death, and Barry, Sr., who died not long after the papers were sold, found the memory of the scandal so distressing that he never discussed it with his children. In his later years, he seemed to be unable to recall much about it, a form of denial that his daughter believes is typical of the South —or, at least, of the Old South. Barry's insistence on staying on the surface of things—like the mannered charm of the author's mother, the witty table talk expected of the children, the ocean of alcohol that kept the elegant parties afloat but destroyed so many members of the family—created a world that was impossible for Sallie to believe in, which may explain her insistence that the term "Southern liberal" is an oxymoron. But another form of denial is at play in her book, and that is the denial of the possibility of her family's ordinary fallibility, and its ordinary humanity. —LIS HARRIS

BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

TOURISTS, by Lisa Goldstein (Simon & Schuster; $17.95). An American anthropologist brings his alcoholic wife and two teen-age daughters to a city in an Iraq-like country where the manuscript he has been deciphering originated centuries earlier. Throughout childhood, the two girls have been conducting a game set in two imaginary countries, the chronicles of which happen to correspond to those of the ancient manuscript. As the family feel their way around the hostile city, in which streets and stores have a habit of appearing at some times and not at others, a correspondence is also implied between the imaginary lands and the feuding factions of the ancient society they've stumbled into. The disappointment one feels at the ending of the novel is in proportion to the accumulation of effects it achieves, so much does every detail accrete in the way of suggestive significance. Still, it's hard to hold that disappointment against the author, for she has given us the kind of magic and adventure that once upon a time made us look for secret panels in the backs of wardrobes, or brush our teeth with a book held in front of our eyes, because we couldn't bear to put it down.

GENERAL

A FIRST-CLASS TEMPERAMENT: THE EMERGENCE OF FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT, by Geoffrey C. Ward (Harper & Row; $27.95). In the second volume of his satisfying biography (the first, "Before the Trumpet," appeared in 1985) Mr. Ward takes Roosevelt from his honeymoon, in 1905, to his election as governor of New York, in 1928. The biographer's intelligent use of detail makes Roosevelt and those around him come alive, as complex men and women. There is a good deal of history and politics here, but the theme is survival. Franklin's parents had taught the boy to suppress or deny discomfort, displeasure, and discouragement; and the man's habitual if irrational optimism carried him through the ordeal of his paralyzing illness. Though Mr. Ward never lets us forget that the Roosevelts were snobs, he also shows us F.D.R. at Warm Springs exercising, swimming, and playing with and encouraging a lot of strangers with whom he had nothing in common except being crippled.

STORMY APPLAUSE: MAKING MUSIC IN A WORKER'S STATE, by Rostislav Dubinsky (Hill & Wang; $22.95). The author, who now teaches at the University of Indiana, recalls his career as a violinist in the Soviet Union from 1949 to 1975. Mr. Dubinsky, a Jew who founded a string quartet, refused to join the Communist Party, but his quartet was eventually recognized by the cultural bureaucracy, and was permitted to call itself the Borodin Quartet. The author recalls absurdities and injustices that are beyond the imagination of Western musicians and music-makers; what makes his recollections immediate is his devotion to music that we all know and love. A few stories are cheerfully

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funny, among them an account of the Borodin's stint as accompanists to a Russian circus touring East Germany. His tales of famous musicians—Richter, Oistrakh, Rostropovich, Shostakovich—show us ways that artists resisted or endured dictatorship.

THE STARS, THE SNOW, THE FIRE: TWENTY-FIVE YEARS IN THE NORTHERN WILDERNESS, by John Haines (Graywolf; $16). Mr. Haines, a poet and an artist, knows the Far North from many years of homesteading on the Tanana River in eastern Alaska. The best books about life on the uppermost frontier, the real literature of the north, have been written not by sojourners but by men and women who lived there, in and off the wilderness, and there are very few such books: "Winter," by Cornelius Osgood; "Four Seasons North," by Billie Wright; "Dangerous River," by R. M. Patterson. Mr. Haines' book is one of this number; he is equipped with the skill and the brawn that survival in the wild demands, and also with the understanding to say something valuable about it and the talent to say it memorably and well.

NOTE: "Barbarian Sentiments: How the American Century Ends," by William Pfaff, has been published by Hill & Wang ($19.95). Some of the contents originally appeared here.

MARK MOSES

MARK MOSES, *The New Yorker's* popular-music critic until his death, this summer, at the age of thirty-two, loved music that was subversive—the work of outsiders, who couldn't or wouldn't make concessions to commercialism, and who were drawn to music because it was the best way for them to say something they felt driven to say. Mark was not fond of super-session bands or glib songwriters or matinée-idol balladeers, or *anyone* who took a simple, obvious way to success. He was all for the popularity part of popular music; but he had more sympathy for popularity won with ingenuity, independence, and pure talent.

It happens that Mark's relationship with this magazine was informed by all the things he admired in music. He was not introduced to us by an agent or championed by a friend on the staff. He just one day gathered the pieces he had written for other publications—mostly the Boston *Phoenix*—and mailed them in. The enthusiastic reception he got here didn't compromise his independence or lack of affectation: he continued to hold a daytime job as a senior programmer at a high-tech company in Boston. (He had a master's degree in applied mathematics, and had turned down an invitation to study for his doctorate so he would have time to write.) He kept meaning to come to New York and meet people at the magazine, whom he had met only on the phone, but he never seemed to get around to it. He was too busy listening to more music, going to more concerts, and writing more pieces.

This isn't to say that Mark was antisocial—far from it. He was droll, ebullient, excitable, sharp, and sincere. He had a bubbly charm. He loved to talk, and did it at the speed of a few million words per minute. He especially loved to talk about music. Although his critical approach was sober and intellectual, Mark was one of those people who are plain tickled by music, and he would get as delighted and emotional over, say, a good Ashford and Simpson ballad as some people would over a good birthday present. That affable, sweet, devoted, and conscientious spirit was recognized and appreciated by his colleagues here.

It was early in 1988 that Mark wrote his first piece for *The New Yorker*—a soaring essay on Aretha Franklin, whose bold, visceral power he adored. Over a span of a little more than a year, he wrote about Prince and Randy Travis and Lou Reed and Etta James and Talking Heads and Robert Cray and Chaka Khan. This summer, a protracted illness sent him to the hospital. His goal was to get well and, in the meantime, write a piece about the Replacements, the ornery Minneapolis band that has made dislocation and unconventionality its central themes. Right before he died, Mark managed to write the first few paragraphs of the piece. It is clear that he had a great deal more to say.

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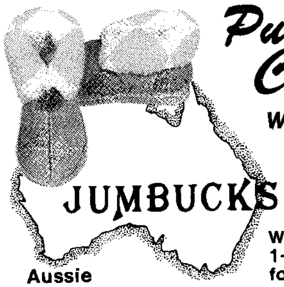

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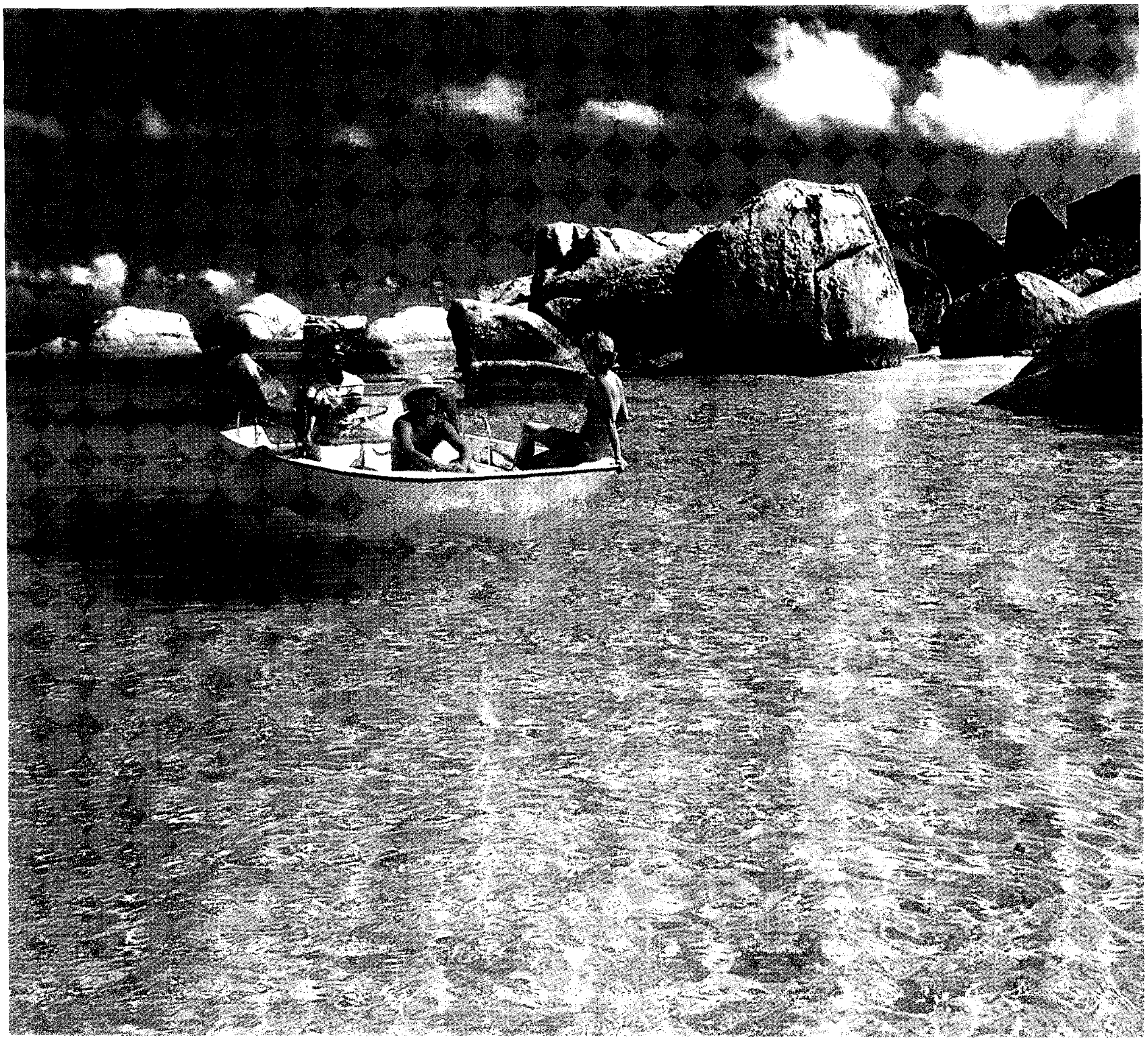

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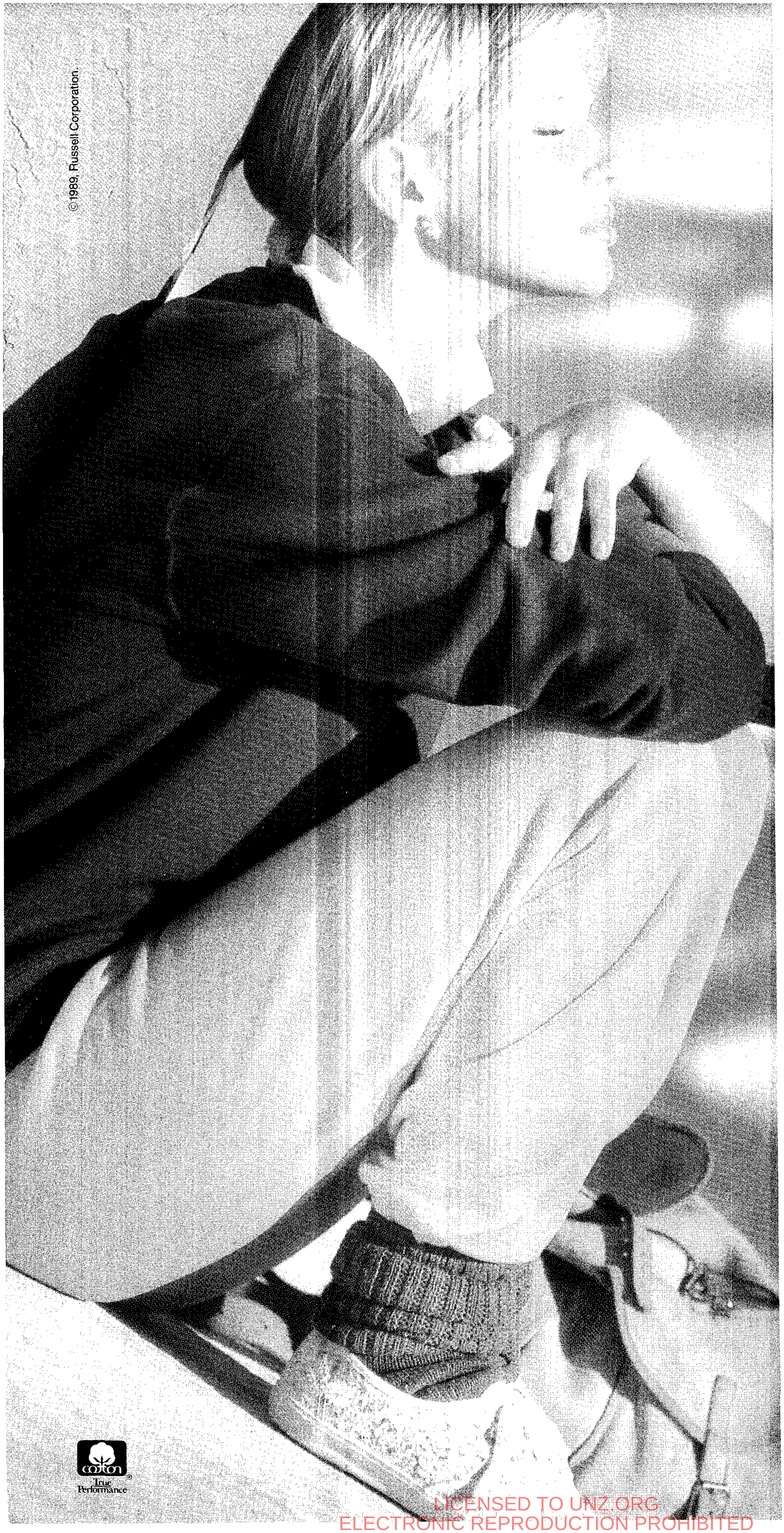
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